An Introduction to Source Material on Modern Indian History

Source Material
on
Modern Indian History



RAM PANDE
M A , Ph D



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TO

A FRIEND OF FRIENDS

MOHAN CHHANGANI



EDITORIAL

History can not be regarded as an specialized subject of interest only to the historians It is one of the forms of disciplined research which concerns us all It satisfies the curiosity of human mind and orientates itself in the world Through history we look for an understanding of unfolding past and guide lines to our future

Britishers introduced here the modern scientific writings of history and historical research but their's was motivated Indian historians like Jadunath Sarkar, S G Sardesai, Nilkanth shashtri etc followed the line and explored quite a lot of research material But it was only ten percent of this treasure

India possesed unity in diversity in all fields and so in its historical Materials Every region of India is full of its rich history and historical material

We are introducing here some of the research material with its critical analysis available at National Archives of India, New Delhi, British Museum London, Assam secretariate, Nagpur

depository and other related places It is hoped that researchers would be benefited by our efforts

We gratefully acknowlege the help, encouragement and cooperation received from the persons, worth mentioning Shri Brijendra Singh, I A S Labour Commissioner Rajasthan, Shri Ishwar Chandra Shrivastava I A S Dy Secretary to the Government of Rajasthan and Shri Jagdish Chandra Shrivastava Librarian, National Archives of India, New Delhi

—Ram Pande

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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Bhargava, M L M A Ph D Retd from U P Educational Services Worked as Assistant Editor, Jawahar Lal Nehru Memorial Fund and has Publications to his credit

Bhaskar H L, is at present Member of Library Staff at National Archives of India, New Delhi

Bhattacharjee, Jayant Bhusan, M A LL B, Ph D is a Member of Teaching Staff (History) at North Eastern Hill University Shillong (Meghalay) and a Professional historian

Mishra, P L, M A, Ph D belongs to Maharashtra Educational Services At present working as Professor of History Vidarbha Maha Vidyalaya Amravati (Maharashtra)

Pande, Ram M A Ph D Editor of Shodhak a Journal devoted to historical Studies Has Several Books Published to his credit like Agrarian Movement in Rajasthan Bharatpur upto 1826, Studies in History—The Jats At present serving Government of Rajasthan as Senior Officer

Shrivastava, J C is working as Librarian at National Archives of India, New Delhi has several publications to his credit

Vijay Kumar, is Asstt Archivist at National Archives of India, New Delhi

Freedom Struggle in India During 1930-31

(A Survey of Proscribed Literature)

H L Bhaskar

The British Government of India in course of the sup pression of the political movements for liberation of the country at that time besides other meausures also banned a large number of the literature during 1930-31 The British Government of India banned and confiscated thousands of controversial books tracts and newspapers during its rule This literature covers variety of subjects including religious debate communal relations, congress activities communism revolutionism the general categories of history, bibliography and fiction Till recently this litrature remained completely unexplored as a set of source material on political and religious developments in Indian subcontinent during British regime Thanks to the sense of presesvation of the administrators this escaped the on slaughts of political and administrative changes and now are open for consultation in the Nation l Archives of India New Delhi, India Office Library, Londdn and British Museum London

A survey of Indian history during thirties will unmistak ably show that it has been a very crowded decade specially for pol tical and administrative events It has witnessed much constitutional activity, perhaps the most momentous announ cement of policy ever made by Great Britain to India It has seen considerable industrial and commercial activity along with rising prices entailing distress to the poorer class, because

of economic depression Both on account of the magnitued of the changes and the importance of the events by which it has been characterised the period under focus ranks perhaps among the most notable years in the history of India

The political philosophy ennunciated by the leaders like Gandhi and Nehru after much experimentation with the Indian Masses and the Br tish attitude towards the political activities of those leaders on the one hand and endeavour to bring con stitutional changes In the political and administrative set up on the other, resulted in various conflicts in the political life of India The strains and stresses resulted in action and counter action of the political parties and Government in the form of various political movements and repressive measures of the Government

A mention can be made of Civil Disobedience Movement Opposition to the Joint Parliament Committee on Constitu tional movement and Violent Revolutionary activities It was obvious for the Government to supre s ruthlessly every atte mpt of any political party to disobey Government orders with a view to dislodge the orderly Government and prevent any violent activity, if necessary by calling up troops and the entire machinery of law and order at its command

The survey of the history of this period on the basis of Proscribed liter ture will also throw light on the political attitude of the masses as well as British attitude towards the people of India The aim of the political movement was to obtain complete independence for India by peaceful non-co operation or civil disobedience or Satyagraha movements and attitude of British Government was to maintain complete law and order and introduce constitutional reforms gradually with a view to keep India within British Empire

The most remarkable featu e of all the activities during this decade has been a shift of the centre of movement from

urban to rural areas The political philosophy and program mes of the various political parties started reaching and appealing the common man Consolidated in cities the move ment for political independence, developed disintegrated and diffused with the masses in villages of India It appeared to Govt the cause of political freedom had been taken up by the common mnn by and large The enthusiasm urge and deter mination with the unity of purpose had never been experien ced by India, expect the up heaval of 1857 as was visible during this period The movement and its suppression resul-ted in greater intensity of further movement The supression of one form of political activity resulted in the manifestation of many other political activities like a flood river flowing into number of streams after getting some obstruction the stream of political movement in India divided itself into in numberable stream of different kinds of activities after the Government suppression Mass movement Boy Cott of foreign goods refusal of payment of agriculatural rent and revenue picketing on liquor shops opening of national edcuational centres, discarding Government jobs, courts, educational insti tutions and foreign cloths, wearing of khadi courting arrests or contesting Assembly elections to wreck the constitution from within etc were all directed towards the same goal indepen dence from foreign rule Literates and illiterates educated and uneduated big and small, rich and poor, childern woman and elders were all affected alike

The literature of this period has also not lagged behind It has fully reflected the mood of the people engaged in the political movement at that time Literature and spirit of the time move side by side Both are complimentary to each other The literature is influeced by the events of the day and the events in turn are influenced by the literature of the time The literature of twenties which was urban in character and meant for elite got converted into rural for

the common man the man in the street in thirties Most of the literature produced at this period is in regional languages in the very language of the common man as spoken by him There is only one strain in it, that is of nationalism and there is only one purpose behind it spread of the gospel of liberation from the foreign rule The influence of this literature on the mind of the masses was not unknown to British Government of India They were fully aware on the impact of this literature and that was why they took immediate steps to stop its distribution or spread of this literature The moment it was proscribed the hide and seek game started between the publishers, public and the government Publication Proscription, disappearance and reappearance of the literature in the form of collection of songs pamphlets books stories novels biographies histories news papers, handbills, magazines, was the order of the day It appeared as if there was no end to it The elertness and vigilence of the Government and promptness of the public were competitive Changing names of publishers and places of publications are clear indications that caught at one places they appeared repeatedley with a different name title and author at another place immediately The spirit of nationalism spread like wild fire without any mass media such as wide circulation of newspapers radio T V The spirit of national integration which is being sought after so much these days was readily available during those days of struggle for freedom The songs of patriotism and self sacrifice were sung dur ng social functions and religious gatherings They had become the part of life Every one was proud of this preserve The Government was helpless in suppressing this literature From North to South from East to West this type of literature was produced in almost all the regional languages and dilect of India

The British Government might have succeeded in sup ssing this literature but they have certainly helped to preserve

it for posterity by getting it proscribed and deposited in the National Archives of India, India Office Library and British Museum This can prove, and is rather proving, a rare set of source materials for writing Indian history in recent times

That the real and authentic history of a country can be best written by its own people, the history of India need rewriting and reinterpretation by its own men So far the history of India has been only narrative of the polit cal events and the activities of administration and political leaders The change for writing economic social and cultural history showing the role of common man is of recent origin and is mostly welcomed So far the historian have neglected the contribution of common man villagers, agriculturist and labour classes towards the freedom of India They have ignored the impact of political upsurge on literature and of literature on political behaviour of people It is perhaps because contemporary source material was not available to them There are two types of recorded material available for historians now in addition to the traditional sources The one is confidential reports on Native Newspapers* in vernacular languages and the other one is this banned lite ature Both are now open and available for use of historians They can fill up lacunna in the interpretation of certain events of Indian history and its reconstruction

It is not irrelevent to mention how thorough was the British law and what were the standards of banning the literature The normal channel was the intelligence agencies got the literature translated and submitted with their reports to the Government for reaching a decision As soon as the decision was reached there upon, the necessary orders were issued to the local police to confiscate the stocks at the press or intercept the remaining copies in the mail But the procedure tended

* See Report on Native News papers J C Srivastava *Shodhak* vol 1 pt B 1972

to very according to the judgements of local governments they proscribed publications for variety of reasons It largely depended on the nature of political trends and public excitement whatever be the procedure and judgement the whole process was quite thorough and efficient as could be seen from the Government files relating to these proscriptions and Gazette notifications available in the National Archives of India New Delhi

The purpose of author is to draw the attention of the historians and research scholars to the fact that there is a source material hitherto unknown to them, available to write the Indian history of twenties and thirties in its right perspective illustrating the role of the common man too in the attainment of the *Indian Freedom It is hoped that* more and more scholars will make use of this material to bring out a change into their outlook There are more than three thousand items available in the National Archives of India Library in various regional languages which need and await a new interpretation of Indian political attitude This may perhaps help us in future to find a solution to many ills of dissension the country is facing today This article is based on author s dessertation submitted to the Kurukshetra University where it has compiled a short bibliography on the above subject of 120 entries and it is not possible to give the full list of the publications listed herein By way of example some of the entries are listed below and these publications were *proscribed by the United* Province Government vide order nos given against the publications A copy of the Government notification along with review of the objectionable portions is also cited at appenix A to give a glimpse into the mind of the Government as how and why such publications were proscribed

Proscribed Publication	**Order No and Date**
1 *Abhyudaya*, 21st Jan 8th May, and 18th May, 1931	2502/VIII-1270 Dt 18-5-1931

Parwana edited by Muhammad Qurban Waris Khan Waris 368/VIII 28 dt 5-5-1930

3 *Inqilab ke lahar* Ed by S P 345/VIII Dt 4-2-1930

4 *Azadi ke Diwane* by Vidya Bhaskar 449/VIII 29 Dt 8 2 1930

5 *Sardar Bhagat Singh* Ram Prasad Bismil 2708/VIII-1303 Dt 2-6-1931

6 *Kranti ke Mandir men* Pt I by Shri Brahmachari Indra and Indra Dev Sinha 319/VIII-24 Dt 1-2-1930

7 *Satyagrah Sangram* by Panna Lal 7993/VIII-1542 Dt 15 12-1930

Other Reference materials :—

India in 1929-30 1930 31 and 1931-32

Kakori ke bhent by Ram Prasad Bismil (Proscribed Publication)

Agra ke satyagraha ka Itihas (do)

All India Congress Committee Bulletin 7th May 1930 (proscribed)

AICC Bulletin of Information 30th April 1 30 (do)

APPENDIX A

GOVERNMENT UNITED PROVINCES

No 319/VIII-24

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Dated February 1st, 1930

NOTIFICATION

MISCELLANEOUS

In exercise of the power conferred by section 99 A of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (Act V of 1898) the Governor in Council hereby declares to be forfited to His Majesty every copy of the book in Hindi entitled *Kranti ke*

Mandir meh' (In the Temple of Revolution), part I written by Shri Brahmachari Indra editor of *Desh Bandhu* and Master Indra Deva Sinha published by Desh Bandhu Pustak Bhandar, Mainpuri and printed by K Pratap Singh at the Desh Bandhu printing Works Mainpuri, on th ground that the said book contains matter the publication of which is punishable under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code

By order of the Governor in Council
S/d JAGDISH PRASAD,
Chief Secretary to Government,
United Provinces

Review of the book in Hindi entitled *'Kranti ke Mandir Men* Part I written by Shri Brahmachari Indra and Indra Dev Sinha published by Desh Bandhu Pustak Bhandar Mainpuri (United Province) and printed by K Pratap Singh at the Desh Bandhu Printing Works Mainpuri 1929

This book gives hort biography of all those revolution aries who were connected with Mainpuri Conspiracy Case The contents of this book it eems have been largely repro duced from other books and magazines In fact the lives of Ramprasad Bismil (who was hanged in connection with Kakori Case) Mukandi Lal (a convict in the Kakori Case) and Genda Lal (leader of the Mainpuri Conspiracy) and some poems have been reprinted from *Kakori ke Shahid* a proscribed book

In the course of a rambling essay the authors say Had there been a (good) Government in India Tilak would have simply remained a great philosopher and Mahatma Gandhi an ascetic and there would have been no necessity for them to become great reformers And Kanhai the newly blos somed flower of Bengal and Bismil the heart of the United

Provinces would have been regarded as profound students and lovers of the art so much sacrifice would not have been called for and great tender souls need not have died on the gallows Had there been no *gunda raj* in India sparks could not probably have been produced in different provinces and probably there would have been no necessity for lean and thin men like me to write such books as '*Dil jale ke Aug or Mainpuri ki chingariyan* Proceeding the authors say Great discontent is at present prevailing in India The British Government is ruling here Discontent has prevailed among the people since the very time it began to extend its raj (in India) It was only due to their discontent that the rebellious sepoys mutineed in 1857 No sooner the (? thoughtful) Indians think of the mean policy by which the pre ent Go vernment spread its *raj* than their spirit of violence is awake ned Under this Government neither the poor nor the rich are happy Even the poor capitalists of this country are servants The authors proceed to say that besides the Congress which does not hope to gain any thing from such a corrupt system of government there are other institutions also which are working for the emancipation of the country Among these are the secret societies Their aim is same as that of the Congress but their methods are different Secret societies aim to gain freedom in no time It is no easy matter to enter into the temple of revolution Uncontrolled and undisciplined youths are rushing towards the temple of revo lution but they know not what revolution is Even before they und rstand its true nature they are led away by passion meet with obstacles and fail Disguised flowers have no place in the temple of revolution Only they can enter this who have recognized themselves, who have studied *the (? God)* They should remember that they will have to gain everything by their own efforts, they will have to learn different langua ges and arts

Writing his autobiography Pandit Dammi Lal say 'I was the first man to lay the foundation of the temple of revolution in Mainpuri I was then a student of the Government High School The deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai had stirred the feelings of the students and they began to show sympathy with the Bengal revolution by collecting subscriptions for their defence We also made up our mind to follow in the footsteps of these revolutions and we began to propagate revolutionary ideas through Lala Lajpat Rai s *life of Mazzini* and Bankim Chandra s *Anandmatha* In 1914 I came in contact with Pratap Singh then a teacher in Shikohabad Members were recruited and libraries were opended with a view to facilitate the distribution of revolutionary literature Deva Narain Sidha Gopal and others were enlisted as members of our party and the Mission High School become a centre of revolutionary activity Latter on centres were opened at Agra Shahjahanpur and Allahabad

In the course of his autobiography Thakur Pratap Singh writes I happened to read the old files of Hind *Kesari* It brought about a revolution in my mind and I shifted more and more towards politics I flatly refused to serve the mean Government when my uncle asked me to join the government service While living at Shikohabad I met Pandit Dammi Lal and joined the revolutionary party We recruited members from the school and sent them to other districts They worked efficiently and initiated new recruits But before they did so they had to inform us all about them At Jaipur one of our workers met a Bengali who was in the pay role of the Government but he (the worker did not know of this He recommended him to us but on inquiry we found that he was a spy We tried our best to get back those letters that has pased into his (spy s) hands but we were only partially sucess ful We stopped our activities at Jaipur and I went to Shahjahanpur Centers were established at Farrukhabad

Bareilly Lakhimpur and Pilibhit We also organised people at Mainpuri Agra Cawnpore and other cities Pandit Genda Lal was a great success He infused revolutionary spirit into the minds of his students one of whom was Mukandi Lal a brave courageous and self sacrificing soldier of the revolutionary party Genda Lal organized a dacoity but was not very successful

Our letters were opened by the C I D inspector When we learnt this, we also arranged to have a look at his letters before they were delivered to him Two C I D men were badly beaten one at Mainpuri and another at Shahjahanpur Though the Government had information that there was a conspiracy against it yet it could not know much about us and we were able to distribute revolutionary pamphlets throughout the province

Dalip Singh a member of the party was directed to carry out certain orders of the leader of his party He was not inclined to do it but he knew that his refusal would mean his death so he went to the District Magistrate and divulged the names of the members of his party As a result of this houses were searched, ammunitions were recovered and men were arrested They were put to much trouble and every attempt was made to turn them approvers but only three men became approvers

Shiva Krishna, an accused fled from the jail and was never again caught Deva Narain Ganga Singh Rama Prasad and others absconded The C I D men tried their hard to arrest them but could not do so The absconders had made such arrangement that they regularly recieved all informations about the movements of the police They were armed and were prepared for an encounter with the police They made arrangements for the defence of the accused and even visited them in the jail On several occasions they found themselves

in difficulties but always got out of them on account of their presence of mind They had also planned to murder the C I D men but the accused did not consent to it and so it was abandoned

The book gives a number of poems copied from the *diary of a revolutionary* ' one of which is from '*Kakori ke shahid* a proscribed book There are other poems also from *Kakorike shahid* The rest of the book gives short sketches of the Mainpuri conspiracy There is nothing worth noting in these sketches

The book concludes with the remarks that the history of the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case shows that the accused were true heros and that their aim was to establish a government based on socialism and to remove the corrupt rule The accused were charged with sedition and as such were punished Readers through this book should guess the mentality of the Government

Translation of certain passages of the book in Hindi entitled ' *Kranti ke Mandir Men* Part I Pages 34 and 35 (1) A thorough knowledge of different languages (2) A study of preliminary and important principles of philosophy (3) Full development of one s intellectual and spiritual thoughts by living with a staunch and votary of humanity (4) Self restraint (5) Resolution (6) It is very necessary to have power and proficiency to understand words of gesticulation (7) Obedience whatsoever the orders may be he should carry them out without deviating from his principle even though he may have to suppress the truth of destroy his own person lity (8) Retired life That is he snould never publish his thoughts through speech A man fells he says to some one that when he will do this (9) Know ledge of arts He should have proficiency in architecture and painting and also in the manufacture of arms (10) He should be a singer and a poet It is

owing to deficiency in different accomplishments that the Indian conspiracies are divulged

Pages 35 and 36 It is necessary to mention here that the revolutionaries have increased since the expansion of the rule of the British Government in different provinces of India The war that was fought with the English at different places during the days of the Mutiny was not a universal one In that war we generally meet with the history of the folly and rashness of the people But since the Partition of Bengal the revolutionaries had begun to again strengthen in every province of India (but) before they had fully developed the Government turned its attention towards them and began to crush them badly so much so that many newly blossomed flowers were hanged The result of this was that the people became more enthusiastic and the work of the revolutionaries continued somehow or other It was in 1921 that the non cooperators hoisted the flag of independence People become very enthusaistic Most of the students of schools and colleges went mad after liberty and bands of them began to work in almost every part of India Had not Gandhi been in power and control during those days of enthusaism the revolutionary party might have very probably brought about rebellion througo revolution The fire of enthusiasm had been then burst out in Mainpuri al o Great men began to work vigorously and run about here and there even as the sparks fly in different directions

Pages 44 and 45 So the English soldiers arrested and interned him for life at Benares The blood of the illustrious Raja Tej Singh boiled as long as he remained in internment A desire to crush the English soldiers was troubling him but what could he do It is said that during his internment at Benaras this brave Raja murdered three Englishmen To the last of his life he played with (brooded over) serious thought of revenge At last he died in 1899

Page 52 "Revolution alone is life is a true principle Revolution is the beauty of life and peace is its true ideal

Page 53 With a view to increase its trade it made up its mind to ruin the Indian trade and industries Not being satis fied with imposing fines upon the artisans and reducing them to poverty it got their fingers cut with cruelty and ruined their finest industries Then it ruined the capitalists and the landlords of India and propogated Christianity by separating brothers and sisters mothers and sons and husbands and wives so that religious property may be destroyed But now the Indians were also awakening

Page 53 and 54 As a result of this the Mutiny of 1857 broke out But this too was unsucessful The fire of revolu tion cooled down among the Indians The slumbering wave of revolution has again begun to stir since the days of Parti tion The Swadeshi movement was started to stop the Parti tion of Bergal It was then that the Indians came to know that England had forgotten her duty in her selfishness she was ill disposed sin has taken root in her heart and that we *should get rid of her in some way or other With these objects* in view the Indian youths began to be active and revolutionary institutions great and small were established throughout India For sometime they worked secretly Only they who could sacrifice themselves could become members of these institu tion After some time the irresolute votaries began to divulge the existence of secret societies with the result that many youths were either hanged or transported for life This has *also a little effect upon the public Discontent began to* spread every where and the effect of the sacrifice of the martyrs began to spread its wings all round Efforts were made to establish centres in the United Provinces also

Pages 175 and 176 The hated rule of British Govern ment is making the Indians weep and feel anguish The evil

ways of slavery have made them distressed The ideal reformers are preparing schemes for reform but the Government does not hesitate to call them wahabies and revolutionaries The Government is feeling perturbed on accound of their great desire to serve the mother and evilly punishes the votaries of revolution It is an offence for any one to say that we are against such a defective rule and therefore we want the ruin of the rulers He who says this had to die at the gallows (literally has to kiss the string of his life) It appear from a perusal of the history of the accused of the Mainpuri conspiracy case that they were not insane but were true heroes The aim of the system of their work was to remove the defective Government and establish a socialistic one Publicity reduce the utility of the work so they did not advertise what they did That is why they were finding necessary means and doing their organization silently

It was in 191 that the Government got information about their work Their secret activities were stigmatized as rebellious and they were therefore punished Reader should read the history of their activities and guess the mentality of the Governmet

Title page

Be courageous take up arms India is in your hands
Let the flag of independence be hoisted up God is with you

Some Important Sources of the History of Modern Cachar

Jayant Bhushan Bhattacharjee

Cachar, now a district of Assam is situated between longitude 92° 15 and 93° 15 East and latitude 24° 9 and 29° 8 North covering an area of 6941 2 sq km and is com posed of three sub divisons namely Silchar Hailakandi and Karimganj It is surrounded on the north by the North *Cachar Hills district of Assam and Jaintia Hills district of* Meghalaya on the east by Manipur on the south by Mizoram and on the west by Sylhet district of B ngla Desh and Tripura State [1]

On the eve of British annexation the present North Cachar Hills and Hojai Jamunamukh Davaka area of Now gong district of Assam and Jiri Frontier of Manipur State formed parts of Cachar while the modern Karimganj Sub-division was included in Sylhet district (Bengal) Thus the

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1 *Census of India 1961 Cachar Hand Book P 1*

2 Hamilton F *An Account of As am* p 83 West from Mani pur and its dependecies on the frontier of Assam is the territory of the Kacchar (Cachar) Raja which borders with Assam from nearly opposite of Koliyabar to the river Kopili which enters the Kolong about the middle of its course The length of this frontier is therefore about thirty miles At the Kopili Kachhar reaches with a cor nor to Kolong but in general it does not descend into the plains on the bank of that river It extends a little south of the Surma which passes through Silhent or Srihatta in Bengal and therefore to about 24 30 of north latitude while its northern extremity is in about 26 20 north giving 110 geographical miles for the length

Kingdom of Cachar, or *Heramba Rajya* in medieval period consisted of two distinct divisions viz North Cachar Hills, which were a section of the Assam Range and Cachar plains, that formed the eastern extremity of the alluvial Surma Valley of Bengal The Cachar plains or Barak valley, consisted of the Silchar and Hailakandi sub divisions of the present district, and was a natural extension o the vast Bengal plains Naturally it was included in the various kingdoms that emerged in Bengal during the pre historic and historic periods like Gauda Vanga Samatata and Harikel [3] and was peopled by the Bengalees In thirteenth century A D the picturesque Cachar Valley was under the Tipperahs, a section of the Bodos [4] whose territory then in addition to present Tripura included a significant section of the Sylhet and Comilla districts of Bangla Desh and at a time the capital of their kingdom was at Khalangsha in Cachar [5] But the Tipperahs gradually moved eastward, and in Cachar Valley an independent kingdom developed of which Tulashidwaja was the reigning prince during the 15th century [6] However in 16th century Cachar was again annexed to Tripura [7]

The North Cachar Hills were then included in the territory of the Dimachas another section of the Bodos They are earliest known inhabitants of the Assam Valley At one time they ruled over Kamaupa where from they were expelled by Pushyevarman the founder of the Varman Dynasty in 4th centuary A D The Dimachas then established a kingdom at Sadiya where they ruled for several centuries and exercised

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3 R C Mazumdar *History of Ancient Bengal* p 1
4 S Endle *The Kacharis* p-14
5 A C Choudhary *Shrihattar Itibritta* p 48
6 *Ibid*, p 204
7 *Ibid* p 205

their jurisdiction over a vast territory with headquarters at Dimapur (now in Nagaland)[8] Meanwhile Ahoms a section of the Burmese wandered into the eastern parts of the Brahmaputra Valley Obviously, they came into conflict with the Dimachas and the rivalries between the two continued for some centuries In the tug of war the Ahoms were ultimately sucessful and the Dimachas had to shift their capital gradually eastward In 1536 the Dimachas pitched their capital at Maibong But the Ahom pressure was still tremendous and the Jaintias in the west also initiated conflicts with the Dimachas[9] To make matters worse Naranarayana Raja of Coch Behar despatched an expedition under Chila Roy, his General, which along with other eastern state overran the territories of the Dimachas and compelled the ruler to submit Any way the Koch supremacy was only temporary and the Ahoms resumed their hostilities A Raja of Maibong then contracted relationship with the Raja of Tripura by marrying latter s daughter and the Barak Valley (Cachar) came as rent free marriage dowry Ultimately the capital was shifted from Maibong to Khaspur in the Cachar Plains and the Kingdom then onward was known as Cachar[10] to the people of sylhet This Dimacha family ruled over Cachar till the British occupation In 1830 Govindachandra Narayana the last Raja of Cachar was assassinated by some Manipuri conspirators upon which Cachar was annexed to the British dominion in India At first Cachar was declared to be a non

8 E Gait *A History of Assam* p 248

9 J B Bhattacharjee *Jayantia Heramba Relations* 1536 to 1708 Proceedings Indian History Congress Muzzafarpur, 1972 pp 251-4

10 P N Bhattacharjee *A Critical Study of Mr Gait s History of Assam*, P 14

Regulated Province [11] and then placed under the Commissioner of Dacca (Bengal) However with the creation of the Chief Commissionership of Assam in 1874 three Bengal districts of Cachar Sylhet and Goalpara were transferred to Assam to make the new province viable [12] This transfer, besides other problems had created a g ographical puzzil Historical researches in scientiff line in India is of recent origion The historians of Bengal considering Cachar as part of Assam have not included the region in the modern historical works on Bengal while the Assamese Scholars generally refer to Assam valley by Assam although the Province of Assam from 1874 to 1947 included three Bengali districts of Cachar Sylhet and Goalpara tribal district of North Cachar and Mikirs Hills the present states of Meghalaya and Nagaland and the Union territories of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh Truely speaking, in British Assam the Assamese speaking areas roughly constituted 30 per cent of the total area of the province and similar percentage was of the Assamese speaking population It is a irony of history that despite all these factors the province was named as Assam A history of Cachar has therefore yet remained to be written But researcher in the Pre British history of Cachar is bound to be handicapped by the dearth of source materials as there had been no attempt to preserve the records of the *Raj Darbar* If preserved the e records would have been the most valuable sources for studies in the History of Cachar in medieval period Inspite of all these handicaps it is our pious duty to see that the real history of this unfortunate district has been written and a history of few centuries before

11 J B Bhattacharjee The Pattern of British Administration in the Garoland *Journal of Indian History* Vol LI Part III P 513

12 *Home Public Proceedings* 1873, Nos 521 33

the British annexation of Cachar will reflect the true back ground of the district

The source of the medieval history of Cacha may be grouped as follows (A) Historical Records (i) Local Records (ii) Contemporary Records and (iii) British Records (B) Arch ecological (i) Coins (ii) Inscriptions and (iii) Monuments and Religious Shrines (C) Literature (i) Local and (ii) Contemporary, and (D) Foreign Accounts

A Historical Records

(i) Local Records The records of the *Heramba Raj family*, which ruled over Cachar on the eve of the British annexation, would from the most important authentic and useful sourse for the medieval history of Cachar The official language of Cachar was Bengali The language of the records was therefore Bengali while texts of the coins and inscription were inscribed in Sanskrit in Bengali character Unfortunately, most of these records were destroyed during the wars and un ettled state of affairs that preceded the British annexation of the country During the Burme e and Manipur invasions the headquarters of Cachar was shifted from place and the Raja was even for a long time exiled in Sylhet In the night of 24 April 1830 Raja Govindachandra Narayana was assassinated by a group of Manipuri conspirators and the Palace at Haritikar was completely gutted [15] Naturally, the records that might have been preserved in the *Kutchery* of this last capital of Cachar were reduced to ashes However many of the records of the Cachar Government are still preserved in the various official archives in the country including Cachar District Records Room at Silchar and in the Records Section of the Assam State Secretariat Important records are still available in private hands in Cachar, particularly in the

15 *Foreign Political Proceedings*, 21 May 1830 No 8

families of the *Mantris Mazumdars* and priests Some statutes and ordinances issued by the Rajas are appended and published in mordern Bengali Historical works like *Shrihattar Itibritta* by Pandit Achuta Charan Choudhary Tattvanidhi *Katharer Itibritta* by Upendra Chandra Guha and *Hermba Rajjer Danda Bidhi* by Padmanath Battacharjee Vidyavinode Many British officers consulted and utilised these official and private records in Cachar while preparing reports on the history social and political institutions customs and usages in the 'country etc before and after the annexation of Cachar to British India In 1817 Felix Carrey son of Rev William Carrey of Serampore Mission went to Cachar for missionary purpose, but offered himself for the service of the Raja Govinda chandra wanted to utilise his services for writing English petitions etc to the East India Company Felix on the other hand kept constant touch with the Government of India and sent a number of reports secretly on the political and economic conditions of the country These reports were based on the local records and are available in the Political Proceedings of the Government of India [14] More important was the report of Thomas Fisher who visited Cachar in 1823 and studied the local records and literature and finally submitted a detailed report on the history of Cachar [15] Sir Edward Gait had consulted and utilised even quoted some of these records in his *Report on the Progress of historical Research on Assam* [16] Some of the Bengali letters written by the Rajas of Cachar Krishnachandra and Govindachandra can be seen in the book *Prachin Bangala Patra Sankalan* edited by S N Sen and and published by the University of Calcutta in 1940

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14 *Ibid* 18 June 1830 No 602

15 Secret Consultation 12 December, 1823 Nos 5-7

16 Published by Govt of Assam Shillong, 1897

(ii) Contemporary Records Cachar had diplomatic relations and emissary contacts with the neighbouring state like Jayantia Tripura Manipur and the Ahom state and therefore the official records of these states are bound to be helpful in writing the history of Cachar The three eastern states of Cachar Jayantia and Assam had repeated disputes during fifteenth to eighteenth century The Ahom records and Bengali records of Jayantia are sure to high light this tripartite episode The Bengali records of Koch Behar court are helpful for studies in the Koch invasion of Cachar The Tipperahs had held Cachar under them for a long time in the medieval period and even there were some wars between Tripura And Cachar The Tripura Records (Bengali) are sure to facilit te the construction of these facts The Rajas of Cachar had contracted matrimonial relations with the ruling family of Manipur and repeated invasions were led against Cachar by the Manipuris In the medieval period the *Chaitanya Vaisravism* together with Bengali script and language had entered Manipur through Cachar effecting a redical change in the *Meitai Vishnupriya* society The records of Manipur will be helpful in these respects Unfortunately however like the Cachar records most of these records have been destroyed But some records are still preserved in various Archives and many have been used by British officials

(iii) British Records The East India Company had ascended to the *Dewanee* of Bengal in 1765 and by 1772 they achieved paramountcy over the province but Cachar passed under the Company only in 1832 The Cachar plains was peopled by the Bengalees who had regular contacts with their counterparts on the other side of Surma, while the Dimachas and other tribal subjects of the Raja came down to the plains in Sylhet frontier for trading purposes The forest resources of Cachar like elephants tusk ivory wax *agur* timber cane bamboo etc had evoked competition amongst the merchants

of the Company while the Collectors of Sylhet also indulged in private trade with the people of Cachar There were frequent trade disputes and border troubles On the otherhand the Rajas of Cachar Krishanachandra and Govindachandra, were devout Hindus and went to the Holy Shrines at Calcutta, Benaras Gaya Hardwar and Tribeni with due passport and escort from the Governor General of India The early records of the East India Company preserved in Bengal Archieves National Archives and in Sylhet and Cachar District Records Rooms give interesting details on these subjects The records reflect a graphic picture of Cachar on the eve of British rule [17] The papers relating the Anglo Burmese encounters in Cachar and the annexation of Cachar are all preserved in India Office Library, London National Archives of India, New Delhi West Bengal Archives Calcutta Assam Secretariat Records Shillong Cachar District Records Room Silchar and Sylhet District Records Room Sylhet *The Sylhet District Records* edited by Firminger and published by the Government of Assam [18] in four volumes contain papers on the economic conditions of Cachar and trade through Sylhet Cachar frontier *The Lives of Lindsays* which is the reminicences of a Collector of Sylhet (1779 to 1789) contain important informations about Cachar during the period R Pemberton s *Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India*[19] is valuable for studies in the socioeconomic conditions of Cachar on the eve of British rule Francis Buchanan s *Account of Assam*[20] prepared

17 J B Bhattacharjee Some Aspects of Heramba Government on the Eve of British Rule *Shodhak* Vol 2 part B pp 189-95

18 Shillong 1917

19 Calcutta 1835

20 London, 1820

during 1807 to 1814 and Walter Hamilton s *Historical, Statistical and Descriptive Account of Hindustan*[21] are important for similar informations

B Archeology

(1) Coins The Rajas of Cachar had maintained the ancient and medieval Indian tradition of issuing coins but unfortunately only few of these coins have so far came to our notice Made of gold silver and copper these coins were inscribed in Devanagari in Bengali script Some details of these coins are found in Botham s *Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet Ass m*[22] A silver coin of Cachar was discovered in the neighbourhood of Maibong by Botham and reported in the Journal of the *Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1912*[23] This coin was issued in 1505 Saka (1583 A D) by Jasanarayan Deva Raja of Heramba (1583 to 1610) "a worshipper of *Hara Gauri Siva* and *Durga* of the line of *Hachengsa* Three more undated silver coins were obtained from the same place One of them was issued by Jasanarayan and the two others by Partap Narayana[24] According to Chronicle Jasanarayana and Pratapnarayana was the same person and Jasanarayana took the name of Pratapnarayana after defeating the Ahoms[25] His first coin suggests that Jasanarayana issued the coin of the year of his accesion to the throne of Cachar[26] (1583) Another coin of Cachar was reported by Stapleton in J A S B Vol VI and has been indetified by Botham as of Tamradhvanjnarayan Raja of Cachar (1706 A D) An undated coin

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21 Calcutta 1828
22 Allahabad 1930
23 Vol VII, P 556
24 E Gait op Cit p 304
25 *Kachari Buranji P 25*
26 No 4 P 160

of Govindachandra Narayana last Raja of Cachar (1813 to 18 0) was collected by F C Jackson I C S from the family of the Prime Minister of the Raja and reported in the J A S B [27] A publication of the Assam State Museum shows that the Coin cabinet of the museum possesses coins of Jasanarayana Satrudamana Tamradvaja and Govindachandra [28] Recently two gold coins and one silver coin of Cachar have been discovered by Vasant Choudhary and Parimal Roy of Calcutta and reported in the Asiatic Society[29] of them a gold coin was issued by Birandarpa Narayana in 1552 *Saka* another gold by Harshchandra Narayana in 1642 *Saka* and the silver by Indraballabh Narayan in 1560 Saka We have reason to believe that the Rajas of Cachar had all issued coins and few more discoveries will help us to establish a scietific history of Cachar in near future The fact that being defeated by the Koches in the sixteenth century the Raja of Cachar had agreed to pay rupees seventy thousand one thousand gold *muhars* and sixty elehants annually amply testifies the resources of this eastern state [30]

(ii) Inscription Only a few inscriptions of medieval Cachar have so far come to our notice A Bengali inscription (stone) at Maibong bears the name of Meghanarayana and is dated 26th *Asar* 1498 *Saka* (1526 A D) Probably Meghanarayana ascended the throne on that date Another inscription (Sanskrit) on the wall of a temple near Maibong was inscribed on 12th Magha 1643 *Saka* during the reign of Harishchandra narayana The next Raja Kirtichandra Narayana issued two *sanads* in copper plates appointing Maniram Laskar of Bar

27 Vol VI P 161

28 *Ancient Treasures of Assam* P 28

29 The Asiatic Society Year Book for 1970 pp 164 6

30 *Shrihatter Itibritta* P 98

khala (Cachar) as a Minister [31] These *sanads* written in Bengali prose in 1658 *Saka* show the system or appointment of the ministers the duties and powers of a minister his obligation to the Raja and *vice verse* Another inscription can be seen on the wall of the Palace at Khaspur, issued in 16 3 *Saka* during the reign of Harishchandra Bhupati In the wall of *Siva Mandir* at Chandragiri the words *Shriyukta Jayasingha Mahapatra 1706 Sakabda* have been inscribed Incidentally Jayasingha was the Prime Minister of Harishchandra Narayana A land grant (copper plate) issued by Krishanachandra Narayana Raja of Cachar (1780 to 1813) to one Gopinath Siromani a scholar in the Cachar *durbar* has also been discovered [32]

(iii) **Mouument and Shrines :** The architectural remains of ancient and medieval periods are available in vari ous parts of greater Cachar As we proposed to di cuses only the medieval sources in this paper the ancient remains may be discussed in a subsequent issue of *Shodhak* Of the Medieval Monuments capital complex of the Dimachas still stands at Dimapur in a dilapidated condition This lofty monument with its gate way and annexes is an unique specimen of medie val Indian architecture particularly in the north eastern region of the country The curved battlement of the gateway as well as the pointed arch over the entrance point distinctly to the Bengali style of Muhammadan architecture [33] There are some V-shaped pillars which are apparently memorial stones Several fine tanks can also be seen at Dimapur The ruins of the place cum temple of the bricks and stone built by Megha Narayana in 16th Century at Maibong in North Cachar

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31 *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam* p 10

32 *Shrihatter Itibritta* p 102

33 E Gait *op cit* p 302

reminds the glory of this medieval capital of Cachar [34] Kashpur the last capital of Cachar, contains the ruins of a brick built two storied palace temple of *Ranchandi*, *Vishnu* temple and a large number of tanks [35] There is a lake near Haila kandi called *Sakala Dighi* where from some bricks have been discovered which bear the date 1409 *Sakabda* (1817 A D) and thus belong to Pre Dimacha period [36] A conch shell has been discovered in Cachar with the pictures of the *avataras* carved on it and bears an inscription to the effect that it was carved in Biradarpa Narayana s reign in 1671 (1693 *Saka*) [37] There is a *Siva* temple at Chandragiri constructed by Jayasingha Maha patra Prime Minister of Harishchandra Bhupati in 1706 *Saka* [38] Harishchandra had also constructed a palace at Khas pur as stated in the inscription according to the desire of his mother Laksmipriya Devi in 1693 Saka (177) [39] Some remains have been discovered at Shibarband Of them a palace known as *Harishchandra Rajar Path* is most significant Three bricks bear the names of Harishchandra Krishna chandra and Govindchandra respectively [40] There are two long and wide embankments known as *Goarer Jangal* in Hatir harh with two ponds on the way According to a local tradi tion these were constructed by the Raja of Cachar during the Tripura invasion of the state [41] A *Snan Mandir* at Khaspur

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34 *Archeological Survey Report*, 1902–03

35 *Ibid*

36 *Shrihatter Itibritta* p 99

37 Asiatic Society of Bengal *Proceedings*, July, 1895

38 *Shrihatter Itibritta*, p 102

39 *Ibid* p 105

40 *Ibid* p 107

41 *Ibid*, p 107

was constructed during the reign of Govindachandra [42] On the bank of Barak at Badarpurghat there is an old shrine dedicated to *Lord Siva* The main *Lingam* was installed there by Kapila the author of *Shankya* philosophy [43] In the neighbourhood of Laksmipur a town established by Laksmichandra there is a shrine of *Lord Siva* on a hillock installed by Raja Laksmichandra [44] On the peak of Bhuban Hill about 900 metres above the sea level stands the shrine of *Bhubaneswara* with two images of *Bhubaneswara* and *Bhubaneswara*[45] Near about these images unidentified broken and mutilated deities with subterranian passage [46] There is a underground fort in the same hill [47] At Bijoypur there is the famous temple of *Ranachandi* [48] The famous *Mundamala* that at Patherbandi is associated with the Pratapgarh kingdom [49] while the Bhuban Hill ruins with Tipperah The *Vishnu Mandir* and *Dadasha chakra Mandir* at Khaspur were constructed during the reign of Krishnachandra Narayana [50] The *Nimatra* shrine at Damchara *Imam Medhi Mukam* at Phulertal *Kari Pirer Mukam* near Badarpur *Rajar Mar Dighi* near Bihara *Langer Shar Mukam* at Phulertal, *Vishnupur Shiva* near Lalbazar are also noteworthly The temples at Matinagar, Bihara and Sunapur also belong to the Dimacha period [51] The *Devi Than* at Deopani *Mahamaya Than* at Davaka and *Langi Than* near Diphu are hoped to be

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42 *Ibid* p 113
43 *Cachar Assam s Southern Sentinal* p 10
44 *Ibid* p 11
45 *Ibid*
46 *Ibid*
47 *Ibid* p
48 *Ibid* p 11
49 *Ibid* p 11
50 *Shrihatter Itibritta* p 112
51 *Archeology in Assam* p 59

associated with the cultural history of medieval Cachar [52] The ruins of the temples at Kaliabor, Gachtal Gosaiguri Akasi ganga, Autal Davaka Hojai and other areas of Nowgong which were at times included in the various kingdoms of Cachar must be thoroughly investigated [53] Proper excavations are bound to reveal more sites of monuments and temples

C Literature

(i) Local literature : The Rajas of Cachar were the patrons of letters and the royal courts at Maibong and Khaspur were adorned by a galaxy of scholars brought from Bengal who composed literary works in Sanskrit and Bengali Some landgrants of the Rajas of Cachar show the land donated to the eminent scholars who were settled in the state and held *Brahmattara* lands Unfortunately, only few books have so far been discovered It is believed that some valuable books were collected by the visitors and some manuscripts might be available in big libraries in Calcutta and London while many were destroyed by flood which was an annual feature in Cachar

Bhubaneswar Bhattacharya Bachaspati a scholar in the court of Raja Suradarpa Narayana translated *Naradiva Rasamrita* into Bengali at the inspiration of the Raja and his mother Rani Chandraprabha in 1652 *Saka* He is also the author of few other books Anantaram Barman a Dimacha poet, translated *Barhma Purana* into Bengali during the same period Suradarpa s reign was thus an important epoch in the history of literature in Cachar For the settlement of disputes certain principles were codified as *Cachar r Ain* at the inititative of the Raja The Sanskrit work *Vivad Darpan* and

52 *Ibid* p 58

53 *Ibid* p 43-5

Rin Dan Vidhi in Bengali were also possibily written at the same time Jagannath Tarka Bachaspati was the court poet of Raja Laksmichandra Narayana and has left behind some poetical works [54] The last two Rajas of Cachar Krishnachandra and Govindachandra are well known for their literary contributions Krishnachandra s *Rashalilamrita* and *Basanta Lihar* and Govindachandra s *Go ind Kirtan* and *Maharashtshov-Lilamrita* are celebrated Bengali poetical works Although Dimacha tribals in origin these Rajas had mastered over Bengali and Sanskrit languages while Bengali had almost become their mother tongue Chandramohan Barman a Dimacha poet in the court of Krishnachandra, was a great Bengali poet and his poems are still held in high esteem The devotional songs composed by Krishnachandra and Govinda chandra are highly popular Some of their songs and poems of Chandramohan were published in *Cacharer Itibritta* while many more have been published in recent time in local papers Side by side with Bengali Sanskrit learning had flourished in Cachar during Dimacha rule Raghunath Bhandari a Dimacha official of Krishnachandra went to Benares with the Raja in eighties of the last century to attend a *Mahasabha* where many Indian Rajas and the scholars were gathered It is said that Raghunath defeated many scholars in *tarka* and was decorated with *t tle* [55] Govindchandra himself was well educated in Sanskrit He taught Sanskrit to a Brahmin youth of Kalain and gave him the title of *Vidyalankar* The Sanskritists of the kingdom used to meet in the *Raj durbar* to deliberate on the *Shastras* and the Raja himself used to initiate the discussions

This literary movement in Cachar was initiated by Sura

54 U C Guha *Kacharer Itibritta* 98

55 *Ibid* p 108

darpa Raja of Cachar who himself composed some *Malshi* songs Subsequently, very many books were written in Cachar which may be utilised as the sources of the history of Cachar Sitrudaman a Raja of Cachar for example was the hero of a Bengali novel *Ranachandi* This book was written after Satru daman had successful repulsed repeated Mughal invasions against Cachar[56] During the reign of the later Rajas of Cachar few more Sanskrit works were translated in Bengali Notable among them are *Vishnu Puran, Gaya Puran, Prahlad carit Ayodhya Kanda Kiskinda Kanda Sunder Kanda Lanka Kanda and Uttar Kanda* of *Ramayana* and *Virar* and *Druna Parvat* of *Ma habharata* Besides *Padma Puran* (based on *Manasha* lenged) *Viravahur Yudha Laksmaner Shaktishel* (both based on *Ramayana*) were composed in Cachar The names of all the translators and composers are not known as we could not go through the original manuscripts Mukunda Datta a well known poet of Cachar composed the book *Raghunather Aswamedh* One Sambhunath Sharma Deshamukya of Udharband prepared a long map indicating the routes and physical features from Cachar to Kashidham (Benares) to faciliate the visit to Krishna chandra to the latter place[57] The Surma Valley has a notable contribution to the Bengali folk songs and Cachar has its due share Some of the songs composed by the bards of Cachar have been published in local papers and others are still in oral use while many have died their natural death A few songs are available in my own collection These songs refer to the historical incidents like foreign invasion flood and famine An old *Panchali* written in Cachar has also come to my notice namely *Gopichandrer Panchali* written by one Krishna Mohan in 1644 *Saka* at Khaspur The book gives the details of the

56 Jagannath Dev *Heramber Itibritta* AZAD *Nava Varsa* Special 1370 B S p 8

57 *Ibid*

social, political and economic conditions of Cachar during the rule of Raja Gopichandra

(ii) Contemporary Literature The medieval Sanskrit, Persian Bengali Assamese and Manipuri historical literature make frequent references to Cachar The Sanskrit poetical works *Kalika Purana*, *Yogini Tantra* *Vaidic Purabritta*, *Varaha Puran*, *Vayu Puran*, *Tirtha Chintamani* *Vaidic Sangiidhani Grantha* and *Unakuti Tirtha Mahatya* refer to *Barabakra* and *Kapila Tirtha* It is stated that the river Barak (Barabakra) was considered as a holy river all over India and that Kapila the author of *Shankya* philosophy had his *Ashram* on the bank of this river at Sidheswar, besides making general reference to the country *Yogini Tantra* and *Kalika Purana* refer to *Bhubaneswar* as well *Amar Kosh* refers to Cachar as *Pratyanta Desh* and stated that Unakuti was included in the said *Desh*[58] *Kamakshya Tantra* another Sanskrit work shows that Cachar was included in the *Shapta Khanda Kamarupa*[59] *Vabhishya Puranya Brahmakhanda* refers to Heramba Desh and its neighbouring countries like Varendra Jayantia and Manipur and stated that *Ranachandi* and *Barabakra* were in the kingdom and a part of it was known as Kachhal[60] *Deshavali* another Sanskrit work written in 1650 *Saka* states that Khaspur Dharmapur Shrigalghat, Tiladrishal Phulshand Jayanagar Chapghat Bandashil Chatshati, Baoyaganj were important *Parganas* of Cachar besides supplying valuable information about the reigning Kings[61]

The Persian work *Baharistan i ghaibai* by Mirzanathan gives the details of Mughal invasions on Cachar *Ain i Akbari*

58 *Cachar Itibritta*, p 2 *Shrihatter Itibritta* p 127

59 *Ibid*

60 *Ibid* p 48

61 *Ibid* p 49

another Persian work is important for revenue arrangements in Karimganj under the Mughals *Rajmala* the Tripura chronicle in Sanskrit and Bengali writtern in 13th Century A D is the most authentic source of the history of Tripura rule in Cachar The Ahom and the Assamese *Buranjis also make* valuable references *Kachari Buranji* for example, gives the details of Assam Cachar relations while *Jaintia Buranji* of Jaintia Cachar relations The chronicles of Manipur like *Manipur Samhita* in Sanskrit *Khulam Puran* and *Chertharol Kumbaba* in Manipuri and *Vijay Panchali* in Bengali are important for Cachar s relations with Manipur Darang *Raj vansavali* the Koch Chronicle, refers to Koch invasion of Cachar The Burmese chronicles are also sure to give similar details of Burmese relations with Cachar

Sylhet the birth place of emminent Sanskrit and Bengali scholars had a unique tradition of maintaining historical records through *Panchali* *Kula Panjika* and *Bamsa Patrika* mostly in medieval period Since Sylhet and Cachar had the closest relations these *Panchalis* are bound to contain some materials for Cachar Karimganj was till 1947 included in Sylhet and in area itself many *Kalanjis* are said to have been written The *Vaisnava* literature of Bengal particularly those composed in Sylhet are important sources *Tujarike Jalali* a Bengali poetical work and in all probability a translation of the Persian work of the name is helpful for information regarding Muhammedan expansion in Surma Valley

D Foreign Accounts

The chronicles show that the Cachar and the adjacent region of North Eastern India had trading relations with China and Burma Therefore proper investigations in those countries may unearth some accounts left by the traders and *travellers There are some well known accounts of the Chi* nese travellers in ancient time and the medieval period is

more potent for such accounts Unfortunately none of them so far have come to our notice

The account left by the Muslim travellers are well known and some of them clearly refer to the region Alberuni s Account, for example is very important for the geography and the people Quazim another Muslim traveller mentions about the economic products of the region The accounts of Shihab ud din Talish Minhaz us Siraj and Abdus Salam may also be properly scrutinised and some facts are bound to be revealed

In the end, I would like to mention about some histori cal works published in the latter part of the 19th and early years of the present century based on origional sources when local records were more easily available These books are on Cachar and the neighbouring states all of them contain refer ences to Cachar *Cachar Itibritta* by Upendra Chandra Guha *Heramba Rajyer Danda Vidhi* by Pandit Padmanath Bhattacha rrya Vidyavinode *Shrihattar Itibritta* by Pandit Achuta Charan Choudhary Tatvanidhi *Tripurar Itihash* by Kailash Chandra Singha *Jayantiar Itihas* by Mohammad Abdul Aziz *Koch Bihar Itihash* by Khan Saheb Amenant Ulla *Maimansingher Itihash* by Kedarnath Mazumdar *Shrihatta Derpan* by Maulavi Moha mmad Ahmed *Murshidabadar Itihash* by Nikhil Chandra Roy *Kamarupa Sashanavali* by Pandit Padmanath Bhattacharya Vidyvinode *Assam Buranji* by Haliram Phukau *Banger Jatiya Itihash* by Nagendranath Basu *Banglar Itihash* by Rakhaldas Banerjee *Brihat Banga* by Dinesh Chandra Sen deserve special mention

Indian Political Practice

J C Shrivastava

The National Archives of India New Delhi has got a very valuable publications in its possession in its Library is '*Indian Political Practice* by C L Tupper of Indian Civil Service It is a collection of the decisions of the Government of India in political cases compiled by C L Tupper in his capacity as an offcer on special duty in the Foreign Depart ment in 1895 It has been a confidential publication meant for the use of the Political Officers posted in various Indian States and of the foreign and political department of the Government of India on the one hand and Viceroy and Gover nor General on the other in deciding various cases and dispu tes arising out of the differing interpretation of treaties *Sanads* and engagements entered between the British Government and Indian Native States in the wake of the rising British Power after the disintegration of the Mughal Power The publication is in four volums fourth being the exhaustive index of the preceding three volumes which contain the orders of the Government of India and descriptions of its proceedings Tupper has tried to revolve a sort of Indian Political Law consisting of the rules and principles out of his compilation which governed the relations existed between the British Government and the Indian Feudatory States This was done purely for reference purpose and was a revision of another compilation done by Mortimer Durand (Later Sir) in 1875 Mortimer Durand had compiled his '*Leading Cases* under the orders of Charles Artichison the Foreign Secretary to show the practice and policy of the Government of India in their dealings with Native States The Cases were selected

principally from amongst those which had then comparatively lately been under consideration or which actually current at that time The choice was determined mainly by the import ance of the case or by its connection with some principles which the Government of India had accepted [1] The cases were not selected with the object to afford any general view of accepted principles regulating the relations between the British Government and Indian States There were thirty six cases in all and in two thirds of these each case stood by it self, often comprising principles relating to different subjects There were many repetitions which could have been avoided The remaining cases were notes on subjects material facts and conclusions relating to some particular topics being brou ght together in one place The cases were not arranged on any definite plan or to develop continuously a set of ideas which could be regarded as a whole After the lapse of twenty five years it was decided to revise the compi lation of Mortimer Durand and make it more orderly and comprehensive detailing the existing policy and practice of the British Government of India in the affairs of the Internal Protectorate

Giving a plan to revise the *Leading Cases* of Durand in a memorandum (vide Foreign Department Internal A October 1893 No 81) C L Tupper made it clear that so much material had accumulated during the preceding 25 years that it would have to be overhauled and rearranged by the compiler

In his memorandum Tupper submitted to the Viceroy that three things were required for the improvement of the working of the Indian Political System These were

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1 Preface to Indian Political Practice

2 *Ibid*

1 A general introduction to the study of the British Government's relations with Native drawn up in such a way that it might be published States

2 The revision of Aitchison's treaties and

3 The revision and compilation of Durand's '*Leading Cases*' and their circulation to the Political Officers

A fourth but smaller matter alfo seemed desirable That is revision of the subjects or the examination of officers appointed to the Political Department This could be done if the requirements under heads 1 2 and 3 above were met

The requirement No 1 was met by the publication of C L Tupper's book *Our Indian Political Officers*

No 3 requirement was the problem for which C L Tupper was asked to take up the work To quote C L Tupper from his memorandum I think a more *complete* collection of '*Leading Cases*' should follow the lines of those already compiled Each case should be a simple precis of the facts sufficient to bring out the principles and the leading principles should be stated in hand notes as in the present book It is very important that in making this compilation no new matters should be introduced The cases should be authoritative in as much as they would represent the actual decisions of the Government of India It would be essential that the narratives should be composed with great care and accuracy and that the head notes should contain no more than what actual decision in each case would warrant [3]

The idea was to give the compilation an authority and

3 Memorandum on the Proposed revision and complition of Durand's *Leading Cases* Foreign Department Internal-A Oct 1893 No 81

was to be circulated among the Political officers so that the principles of the whole System be better understood In these intercourse with *Darbar* Political Officers could be supplied with a storehouse of precedents and illustrations which would be of great use to them and the reference to headquarters should be diminished as officers would see that many points on which they might otherwise had to refer had already been decided But as already stated so much material had accu mmulated during the preceding 25 years that it took two years for C L Tupper to give a shape to it for his compila tion The *Leading Cases* of Durand were completely overhauled and rearranged by him not only by going through the mass of papers in the Political Department but by inviting the suggestions of political Officers who could indicate from their own knowledge of political proceedings the cases of leading type which he incorporated in the proposed compilation

C L Tupper was appointed for this task for a period of six months in the Foreign Department in the first instance But in order to make his compilation an authoritative guide as to the principles upon which the Government of India are in the habit of acting with regard to the affairs of Native States proved to be of a very extensive character, and he confessed in his letter to the Secretary that he did not fore see how extensive the work was likely to prove [4] On looking over the volumes of cases which he had already collected and other relevant notes and papers in his hands he came to the conclusion that the whole subject was capable of presen tation in a more systematic way than he had supposed It was therefore pleaded by the Government of India with the Secretary of State for India to extent his time and emolu

4 Foreign Department Internal A Sept 1894 Nos 1-11

ments[5] The proposal was agreed to It was also decided that the compilation should be in the name of C L Tupper "and that the Government of India while not committing themselves to any of the facts or opinion contained in the work consider that it will be found useful for purposes of reference[6] That is to say opinion expressed by C L Tupper as headnotes and summary would be treated as his opinion, whereas the cases and decisions cited there in would be autho ritative guide to the Political Officers

There are 22 chapters contained in three volumes A glance through the list of chapters given below will show the importance and grouping of the compilation and also the subjects under which most of the cases fell with regard to dealings between British Government and Native States

I The Political Subordination of Native States to the Paramount power

II The Political Isolation of Native States

III The Limited Internal Sovereignty of Native States

IV Internvention in specific cases of Misconduct

V Some further Limitations of Internal Sovereignty

VI The subordinate Cooperation of Native States with the Paramount power

VII State Territory

VIII Cessions and Boundaries

IX The Preservation of Native Rule

X The working of the Policy of the Adoption *Sanads*

XI Succession in Muhammadan and other Chiefships

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5 Foreign Department Internal A Sept 1894 Nos 1-11 Letter No 62 of 1894

6 Foreign Department Internal-A Aug 1895 Nos 51-58

XII Some consequences of Successions

XIII Minorities of Ruling Chiefs

XIV British Jurisdiction in State Territory

XV Residency, Ceded and Delegated Jurisdiction

XVI Extradition Between British Indian and Foreign or Native States

XVII Extradition between States territories under different jurisdiction and between subordinate States

XVIII Service of Processes and Execution of Decrees and sentences

XIX The position of Ruling Chiefs and their subjects in British territory

XX The position of British Officials Europeans and the like in State territory

XXI Treaties and Agreements

XXII Titles and Ceremonials

This work has not been utilized by many scholars who have written on various aspects of the history of various native states The work was treated as strictly confidential and the British Government of India withdrew all the copies on the eve of Independence A set has been obtained by the National Archives of India from India Office Library London and now made available to the scholars for use

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Tahootdari System in British India

P L Mishra

The Bhonsla State of Nagpur to which Chhattisgarh was attached did remain the British protectorate from 1818 to 1830 The *Tahootdari* (probably the correct word is *Tahooddar*) system was created during this period The system worked well and therefore the Bhonslas created few more during their rule in the forties of the 19th century After the British takeover of the Nagpur State in 1853 (as the State escheated) some more *Tahootdaries* were formed

The *Tahootdari* system is more akin to the *talookdari* system which prevailed in many parts of India especially in the northern part Talookdars were big landed estate owners who enjoyed several privileges The Tahootdari system of Chattisgarh was also a big landed estate but it had its own peculiarities which make its study interesting

In the following pages an attempt is made, on the basis of original and unpublished records[1], to unfold the system The British Officers while explaining the meaning to *Tahoot* say that it is derived from the Arbic word ' *AHAD* meaning promise or agreement The word *TALOOK* (*Talookdar*) is derived from *ALUKS*, i e to suspend or depent

There were seven Tahootdaries in the region when the system was scrutinised in the sixties of the 19th century

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1 Nagpur Rasidency and Secretariat Records (unpublished) File No 29 of 1862 File head — Tahootdars of Raipur & Bilaspur

They were —

1 Lormee	created in 1826 A D	These two were created by Capt Sandys the British Superintendent of the region during the protectorate
2 Tarenga	created in 1828 A D	
3 Sirpur	created in 1843 A D	These two were created duridg the Bhonsla period (1830 1854) They must have found the system useful
4 Lavan	created in 1848 A D	
5 Khallari	created in 1858 A D	These were created by the Deputy Commissioner C Elliot
6 Sihawa	created in 1858 A D	
7 Sanjaree	created in 1858 A D	

The size and holding of the Thootdaries were as follows[2] —

1 Tahood Lormee containing 117 villages was held by Laxmandas Bairagi

2 Tahood Tarenga containing 109 villages was held by Badrinath Mahajan

3 Tahood Sirpur containing 31 villages under Kapilnath Mahajan

4 Tahood Lavan containing 243 villages, under Johan Das

5 Tahood Khallari containing 123 villages held by Chhikhadan Zamindar

6 Tahood Sihawa containing 145 villages under Chingu Sao

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2 *Ibid* This is a letter from the above mentioned file written by Major I B Dennys, the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur in 1862

7 Tahood Sanjaree containing 134 villages, under Ranjan Singh

According to the British officers who established this system in this region the object of granting Tahood was 'no doubt to induce men of capital to expend it in bringing abandoned villages under cultivation[3]

The system came under the close observation of the then Chief Commissioner of the erst while province of Central Province in 1862 The Chief Commissioner called for a detailed report of the system The Deputy Commissioner Raipur Major I B Dennys forwarded the report[4] with a plea for their continuence The Chief Commissioner did not accept the plea of the above Deputy Commissioner and allowed it to remain an open question receiving a careful consideration in due course The settlement of all the *Tahootdaries* lapsed in the year 1860 Now a question of their survival was at stake The first four Tahootdaries were quite old Some of them had improved their possessions especially in the estates of Lavan and Lormee The earlier Tahootdaries had almost become hereditary but it was never declared so by the authorities

According to the records the tahootdars used to get 20% of the total land revenue collected on behalf of the government The ordinary *malguzar* (Village proprietor) used to get 15% of the total rent collected from the village These Tahootdars therefore would appear actually nothing more then large and favoured *malguzars* He also used to appoint *malguzars* or *Gaontias* under him to collect land revenue from

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3 *Ibid* This is another letter from the file Letter No 993 dated 6 10 1862 page 45 and onward

4 *Ibid*

the farmers The land revenue assessment of the *tahootdari* village was as given below under the Maratha Government The *Subehdar* of the region used to assess *tahootdari* village say at about Rs 100/ Then rupees 80 were for the government and rupees 20/- for the *tahootdar* But the *tahootdar* would per haps sub rent this village to the *Gaontia* or *Malguzar* for rupees 120/- for he had to pay to the government Rs 80/- and Rs 15/- to the Gaontia The remainder would be his share This is how in the Maratha times the four earlier *tahootdaries* used to function

As regards the lately constituted tahoots *viz* Sihawa Khallari and Sanjaree they were 'more or less deserted and it was hoped to induce improvement by expenditure of capital [5] Thus we should have no doubt as regards the working and object of the newone s It was also an induce ment to the men of fortunes to come forward and repopulated the abandoned villages with the help of their capital

In this region the zamindari system also existed It is necessary to know the difference between the two Chisholm the first settlement officer of the Bilaspur District has correctly drawn the line between the two as given A *talookdar* (should be tahootdar) pays into the treasury the annual revenue assessed on each of his village in the same way as if they were *malg zars* and his profits arise from the malikana over and above the government revenue which he obtains from the lessess and the income derived from the village not farmed but mangaged directly by him He has no control over miscellaneous sources of revenue A zamindar on the other hand pays a quota ranging from a third to a fourth only on the assessed revenue of each village [6] In fact

5 *Ibid*

6 Chisholm The Bilaspur Settlement Report para 312

zamindar had "an absolute title on the increased income, a definite authority nd a position in all essentials absolutely [7]

The fact of *Tahootdar* hanged in balance after the year 1860 when the lease period of their s was over Soon after that period the region was divided into two districts i e, Raipur and Bilaspur in about 1862 Thereafter it was decided to settle the revenue of the districts Two S^ttlement officers were appointed for each of the districts Chisholm was appointed for the Bilaspur district and Hewitt for the Raipur district These officers were now left with the job to decide the fate of the tahootdars of the region Out of the seven tahootdaries only two were in Bilaspur district and the remaining fell in the Raipur district How the two officers reacted to the system is given here

About Bilaspur *Tahootdaries*-Lormee and Tarenga Chisholm reports — the tenure was called Tahootdaree under the Maratha government engagement being terminated or continued after the expiration of each stipulated period of lease During settlement operations it become a quetion whether these *t lookdaries* which our government found existing should be mentained undisturbed or whether they should be broken up and the separate villages settle on a *malgoozari* tenure ? The inquiry however showed that both the estates had been in possession of the present holders for nearly 40 years during which interval nearly all the existing villages have been estabished by them [8] Chisholm submitted a special report on the tahoods The following extracts from that will show the recommendations made He wrote On the question of *tahootdaries* tenure generally I would observe that it does not seem to involve a different mode of treatment

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7 *Ibid*

8 *Ibid* para 313

from that of the *talookdaree* tenure in other provinces In its origin it is no doubt essentially different The tahootdars obtained a few villages and an immense waste tract to bring into cultivation The *talookdar* obtained a tract of country already cultivated and settled In both the cases however the individual villages will fall to the settled on the principle laid down for *talookdaree* tenures in the direetions to settlement officers On the other hand, as regards the whole estate if there are no stronger or superior claims to his own, then he is entitled to our consideration and to maintenence in the position in which we found him The *tahootdas* of Lormee and Tarenga in this district are in my opinion from their antece dents entitled to be so maintained But even advisable even on the fiscal ground to break up the etastes because the revenue would not be collected with such facility for we should have to deal with several impoverished farmers instead of one wealthy proprietor [9] Chisholm had a great regard for the tahoods and hence he recommended their continuation which was accepted

Chisholm s counterpart in the Raipur district Hewitt who got an opportunity to deal with the five of the tahoot daries held a different view Hewitt writes about the *tahootda ries* as —Tahootdars were infact holders of clearence leases The tracts made into tahoods were generally wild and remote and they were granted for terms of years varying from 3 to 10 years but the leases contained clause entitling the holder to a renewal of the grant nor was such renewal allowed as a

9 *Ibid*

10 Hewitt *The Settlement Report Raipur*, para 242–243

11 Nagpur Residency & Secretariat Records File No 29 of 1862 File Head—Tahootdars of Raipur and Bilaspur pp 20-24

rule At the time of settlement, there were four (it should be five) parganas in the district held by *Tahooldars* namely Sirpur, Lavan Khallaree and Sihawa Enquiries showed that the expense and trouble of clearing and populating the villages found since the lease of the paragana had fallen upon the sub lessee who had received a loan of grain and money from the tahootdar but as all the given loans were at 50% interest the *tahootdar* cleared a profit by the operation and incurred no expense To ignore the right of these sub lesses was impossible and the cases of malguzars of the older villages were still stronger, as most of them held their villages for a time long before the tenure of the government leasee Hewitt painted the systems in the most unfavourable manner and this sounded the death knell of the system in the Raipur district Thus ended the majority of the tahoods Only two specimen of the system survived till the dawn of independence (1947) In the Zamindaree and state infested region of Cohattisgarh these were only two peculiarities which survived till recently They were perheps alone of their kind in the whole of India

About their title deeds we have some but not relating to all We could get the title deeds of only two Fortunately these two *sanads* are one of the earliest period (under the Maratha rule) and other of the latest period It is therefore a matter of great satisfaction that we can have almost near accurate idea of the remaining The title deed of tahood Tarenga is as under —' To Jaideva Sai Agarwal the resident of Raipur From Capt Sandays Superintendent of the Zilla Chhattisgarh (1827 A D) The tallok of Tarenga pargana Raipur containing 11 villages under cultivation & 14 newly brought under cultivation & 84 deserted total 109 villages are

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12 *Ibid*

given to you as a favour & to improve the villages You are therefore required to conduct the duties of Patel-the revenue the land revenue *Abkaree* and *Pandaree* as they shall be fixed from chowksee [inquiry] you will pay to the sirkar No excuse will be admitted on account of the balance You will have to pay and are not to allow nothing to remain unadjusted

2 The collection formerly allowed on account of adultery fine and remarriages in the Rajah s time are now transferred to the *Kamaishdar s* (revenue officer of the tahseeldar s rank of now a days) hands and you have no jurisdiction in such matters

3 In disputes about land you must settle them by panchayat of 4 *Gaontias* (village Headman) If the dispute is serious report to Kamaishdar

4 The *Sarkar* has appointed you as Patail You must look after the interests of the ryots and advance them money and seed and realise them from the ryots In two years time your service will be known & if the ryots speak in your favour and your conduct is approved of you will be confirmed in perpetuity as Patel If not dismissed

5 Whatever is fixed as land revenue and *Pandaree* you will receive one anna in each rupee from the ryots as *Huk Patailee* and report it to the *ameens* and *Phadanis*—obey these orders do your duty as Patail

Dated 29th August 1829

Another *sanad* which was granted to the newly created Tahood of Sihawa was as follows —

' As the Settlement of the said *Talook* has been made with you from the beginning of 1856 to 1959 for three years according to the *Jamma* (revenue collection) of last year

Rs 980/ deducting Enam at the rate of 15% of Rs 147/ leaves 837—add for Vyram villages not under cultivation 900, ruppees for three years—3399 of which you have Paid 900/ leaving 2499 You must therefore, pay this at Rs 833 yearly—you are to take no forbidden cesses—keep the ryots content and bring land under cultivation You will oust no malguzars from his holding on your own authority but take from him to more than *Jamma* which has been fixed by gove rnment You will make all necessary reports and assist the police in every way You will also pay 1% for the road fund

'(True-copy) dated 6 June (probably 1862) J B Dennys Deputy Commissioner

These two copies were sent to the Chief Commissioner of Central Province by the Deputy Commissioner Raipur and now they are in the Records Room of Nagpur [13] Now we can draw our own conclusions about the system

1 *Tahootdari* system was first introduced in this region during the period of British protectorate by Capt Sandays This must be due to the British association with the Nawabs and *talookdars* of Northern India

2 Most of the tahootdaries of the region were created by the British rulers The Maratha government created only two

3 The system was created with a view *to create a class of big landed estates in perpetuity* as is apparent from the *sanad* of Tarenga In fact the institution of Patails (Superier of several villages) created by the Marathas in Chhatisgarh were not very popular hence Major Agnew (the first British officer of

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13 *Ibid* Letter from the Deputy Commissioner J B Dennys to Commissioner Snow Dated 11th June 1862

14 Agnew *The Subah of Chattisgarh* pp 37-38

this region) dismissed[14] most of them But his successors would have found it difficult to establish relations with every Malguzar, particularly in the tracts under developed and deserted It should not have been economic also It is there fore, big landed estates were formed

The sole object of the origion of these estates was to develop deserted and virgin Land which was in abundance in this region and to develop the region it was necessary that men of resources and influence should be in duced or allowed to take it up and this was done by introdu cing the system It produced good results at least in the estates created in early stages especially the first four This has been mentioned by the British officers

5 **The authority rights and duties of the tahootdars were deliberately not made superior or inferior** From the *sanads* it is clear that neither they had the status of the zamindars nor could they be so popular as the *Gaontia* This was due to the fact that the authority which created them was in two minds and suspicious They were aware of the unpopularity of *Patail* whom they too disliked They abolished that institution as far as possible While creating its counterpart they had the prejudices of the institution of Patail hence this new institution remained only an interme diary and Inherited all the drawbacks of such intermediary Institutions It is therefore that most of them were aboli shed

6 **The institution of tahootdari being a relatively unknown concept to the soil, could not germinate and grow properly** It had developed its institutions in a peace ful and isolated atmosphare

7 Really in Chhattisgarh, the intermediary institu tions **though in existence from time to to time under**

various governments under various names, had never been popular and lost their existence & even rememberance

8 The *tahootdari* system was of recent origin and it did not find favour with the British officers of Raipur It was really very funny that the Settlement officer of Bilaspur favoured it while that of Raipur opposed it It is a paradox how they became good or bad simply by change of the district which only a few years before was one It is more ludicurous that higher officials at the headquarters accepted the view of the officers on the spot without scrutinising it

Calcutta Gazette (1784-1832)

J C Srivastava

The volumes of a weekly news paper the *Calcutta Ga ette and Oriental Advertiser* may be considered among one of the important publications possesed by the Library of the National Archives of India The series contain useful information on political, social and literary life in India obtained during the later 18th and early 19th century and highlight the habits and customs of the early European settlers here The Governor General in Council permitted Francis Gladwin by an order dated February 9 1784 to publish the weekly and directed all the Heads of offices to issue all such advertisements and publications as may be ordered on the part of the Hon ble Company through the channel of this paper The Home (Public) Consultation No 20 dated 9 February 1784 reads as follows I humbly presume that to establish an authorised Gazette under the immediate superintendence of a covenanted servant who should be made responsible for its contents would be measure of public utility and as such not unworthy of the attention of the Government besides being the channel for conveying the proclamations orders of Government and ordinary articles of inteligence it might be made particularly useful to the junior post of the Company s servants by the insertion of extracts from the most approved Persian authors in the original character with English translations and thus faciliate their improvement in that language the study of which has been so frequently recommended to them by the Court of Directors The first number of this

weekly was published on March 4,1784 from 37 Larkins Lane Calcutta

Although known as the *Calcutta Gazette* it changed its title from time to time It first appeared as the *Calcutta Gazette and Oriental Advertiser* (1784–August 1791) from September 1791 to May 1815 it was called the *Calcutta Gazette* from June 1815 to March 1832 it was known as the *Government Gazette* and in April 1832 it was renamed as the *Calcutta Gazette* From the general tenor of the paper it would appear that although it was published as a newspaper containing official as well as unofficial information the official department was kept quite distinct from the editorial and that the Government was in no way connected or identified with the management or politics of the paper, but only used it as medium for making known general orders requisitions and official notices of all sorts News Reports Editorial articles weather reports market reports and shipping intelligence appeared as the regular features Letters from correspondents on various topics as well as poems were also regularly published For local news it depended on its own staff as well as on the reports published in other local contemporary newspapers News were also extracted from Bombay, Madras and Penang Papers For European news the *Gazette* depended on European newspapers European newspaper extracts were also published in detail in special supplements of the *Gazette* Bengali and Persian translations of Government notifications usually found place in the *Gazette* the Bengali translations being sometimes prefaced with such devotional expressions as *Shri Durga* and *Shri Krishnaji*

These Gazettes may serve as a mine of information on political and historical conditions from the time of Warren Hastings to the establishment of paramountcy of British power in India On the one hand the series contain the

historical documents and State Papers, and public notifications of interest issued either from the Secretariats or from the offices of the Board of Trade, the Board of Revenue, the commissioner for the Town of Calcutta or from others and on the other hand editorials leading articles letters from correspondents and advertisements of sales applications for places etc Some papers will be found illustrative of the views then held by high officials on points of Indian Statesmanship and on public questions of various kinds These papers contain the war accounts the political events or a masquerade ball or a public concert and give the researcher a general insight into the state of Indian Society 190 years ago as well as enable him to trace the general progress and rise of British Power in the East The great historical events the operations against Tipu, the siege of Seringapattam expedition to Afghanistan two Sikh campaigns presence of French Privateers and French ships of war in the Bay of Bengal during the war with France the disappearance of Maratha Supremacy with the surrender of Peshwa Baji Rao II the occupation of the important Island of Singapur the changes in Awadh and ultimately the establishment of the British authority in this continent after the overthrow of powers that were hostile to it are all depicted in detail and in interesting manner The letters from special correspondents with the Camp and editorial notices, have been largely quoted and 'take its readers through the by-paths of history and not along its grand routs

Besides the great feats of arms much was done towards the consolidation of British interests during the years of comparative tranquility by the spread of education and other influences of the Western world. The Hindoo College the Mission College the Benaras College and the Serampoor College were founded and opened Oriental literature was encouraged The censorship on the Public Press was

removed The opening of churches canals, roads exten sion of communication by means of steam Navigation and visits of natives to U K and European countries are also described in details many interesting ceremonies in this part of the world and extent and variety of the amusements enjoyed by the society of that period It also presents the picture of the social wants and conveniences of the early English settlers Extracts from Foreign and Indian Press and interesting works are frequently quoted giving some glimpses into the literary trends of that p riod influence of the poets of the preceding centuries and the style of poetry in vegue in those days can be clearly traced in the stanzas found in these *Gazettes*

In short the whole series from 1784 to 1832 covering a period of 48 years presents a comprehensive picture of the social and political life during the close of 18th and the begi nning of the 19th century and has proved a very important source of material for the scholars and historians of Modern Indian history

National Archives of India Library has been able to preserve these *Gazettes* with the efforts of Indian Historical Records commission for the posterity It would not be out of place to mention here that under that sanction of the Government of India the Records Commission had published six volumes of the *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes* of this period from the Military Orphan Press Calcutta The first three volumes were compiled by W S Seton Carr the fourth and fifth by Hugh Sandermann and the sixth volume by Anil Chandra Das Gupta The *Selections* have been arranged and divided into three parts Official Editorial and Advertisements Except Volume I, all other volumes contain table of contents The table of contents for volume I can be found in volume third Irrespective of the change in name from time to time

the same title has been retained in all the six volumes and for the sake of uniformity the same pattern of *Selections* and their arrangement as started with volume I has also been followed

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Papers of the Founders of the Indian National Congress These include documents of Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji and A O Hume Dadabhai Naoroji was President of the Congress session held in 1886 He was the first Indian to be elected a member of the House of Commons in England Twice again in 1893 and in 1906 he was elected President of the Indian National Congress He died in 1917 The records of Dadabhai Naoroji comprise of correspondence notes resolutions reports memoranda and memorials They throw light on the activities of the Indian National Congress India Committee election of Naoroji to the British Parliament and include resolutions of Londons Indian Society Parliamentary papers relating to his activities as Member of Parliament are quite informative His papers relate to his publications also and contain writings and addresses His speeches on the conditions of India and his efforts to educate the British public opinion are remarkable India was Naoroji s daily thought This is evident from his private archives

Another distinguished founder of the National Congress was Justice Badruddin Tyabji He was President of the Indian National Congress in the 1887 session In June 1895 he was appointed judge of the Bombay High Court In 1903 he acted for some months as Chief Justice of the same High Court He died in London on 19 August 1906 Tyabji papers consist of his correspondence speeches his fee books his statement before the Education Commission and his will His correspondence composed of about one thousand letters is the back bone of his papers Letters written by Tyabji are remarkable In his letter dated 16 October 1876 to the Editor of *The Times of India* he pointed out discremination showed towards the Indians and the Anglo Indians As Congress President Tyabji tried to remove the doubts of Muslims and asked them to

join the National Congress He applauded the lofty aims of the Congress but obviously he was sailing against the hostile currents of Muslim opposition and achieved little success Copy of Tyabji s speech to the Bombay Association is availa ble in his papers H s speech as Congress President was sensible and modest His collection includes letters of A O Hume also Hume took the initiative in organising the Indian National Congress His fifteen original letters to Badruddin Tyabji may justly be treated as pieces of literature

Documents of the Congress Presidents The National Archives have also acquired documents of some of the Con gress Presidents In this category papers of four Congress Presidents viz Gopal Krishna Gokhale Subhas Chandra Bose Purushottam Das Tandon and Dr Rajendra Prasad[1] have been included

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was a distinguished nationalist He preside over 1905 session of the Indian National Congress In 1905 Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society at Poona Gokhale s death in 1915 greatly weakened the Indian cause His collection of Private papers has been acquired by the National Archives of India from the S rvants of India Society Poona His documents cover the period 1889 1915 and fall into two broad categories letters written by Sri Gokhale and the letters received by him The number of papers in the former group is smaller as Gokhale did not keep the copies of all the letters written by him There are about 372 letters and notes etc written by Gokhale and these have b-en kept in file No 503 (Parts I to V)

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1 Dr Rajendra Prasad was President of the Indian National Congress in 1934 1939 and 1947 His private papers have be-n discus ed under 'Archives of the first Pre ident of India

Committee U P The priv te papers of P D Tandon are composed of correspondence news paper clippings pamphlets tracts booklets and his speeches His collection includes letters of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru Lal Bahadur, Dr Rajendra Prasad Sir Sita Ram K M Munshi Morarji Desai, M K Gandhi, Dr Bhagwan Das and other eminent persons

The earliest document in the collection is dated 1912 They are papers of a civil litig tion Bal Deo Das V/s Mahant Govind Das Tandonji s correspondence covers a wide range of subjects such as matters concerning—Hindi Sahitva Sammelan views on *Bhoodan* movement opinions on acceptance office by the Congress Peasants Conference, introduction of Hindi and *Nagri* scripts etc

Tandonji s notes on important items 1930-34 dealing with Gandhiji s march to Dandi arrest of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru peasants movement in U P are of enduring value An *eleven page note* in the handwriting of Tandonji pointing out defects of 1935 Act is instructive

In 1951 Tandonji resigned from the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan as well as from the Congress Presidentship Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru offered him Governorship of Assam, which he politely declined This collection is sufficiently *important* from the point of view of research scholars and indispensable for his biographers

The Records of an Extremist Apart from the documents of various Congre s Presidents, the National Archives of India have in its custody the papers of an extremist—Bal Gangadhar Tilak *He* was a famous nationalist leader and was a very erudite scholar He was editor of 'Maratha and 'Kesari Tilak was prosecuted and convicted on a charge of *sedition* He demanded that India should have an autonomous government, absolutely free of the British control. In *1916* Tilak started Home Rule League - In

The rest of the collection is composed of letters received by Gokhale form eminent contemporaries like Sir William Wedderdurn A O Hume Dinshaw Wacha Dadabhai Naoroji Surendra Nath Banerji Pheroze Shah Mehta M G Ranade R C Dutta S P Sinha Rabindra Nath Tagore Motilal Ghose Lala Lajpat Rai, Srimati Sarojini Naidu Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others Moreover there are some subject files such as Congress Compromise Elementary Education Bill Indian struggle in South Africa Islington Commission and some diaries of Gokhale The entire collection has been microfilmed in fourteen rolls

Subhas Chandra Bose in his early career went to England in 19.0 and competed in the I C S Later on he resigned from the I C S and joined the Indian National Congress Subhas Bose was elected President of the Congress in 1938 which he subsequently resigned In 194? he took charge of the Indian National Army and the Indian Independence League Netaji s letters are available in his correspondence with V J Patel papers of the Indian Independence League and letters to Bhola Nath Roy His idea and speeches are available in 91 copies of the *Azad Hind* an organ of the Indian Independence League These copie s of the newspaper include views of Subhas Chandra Bose on the Indian National Army Some of his speeches which he delivered from Pallenbang Tokyo and Djakarta are available

Personal papers of Purshottam Das Tandon an eminent Congress President have also been acquired In his early career he was a lawyer at the Allahabad High Court He was elected Speaker of the U P Legislative A sembly, 1949-50 Tandonji was president of the U P Congress Committee in 1948 He was elected President of Indian Nat onal Cogress in 1950 session He re igned from Congress Presidentship in September 1951 P D Tandon was chairman of the *Bhoodan*

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In 1951 Tandonji resigned from the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan as well as from the Congress Presidentship Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru offered him Governorship of Assam which he politely declined This collection is sufficiently important from the point of view of research scholars and indispensable for his biographers

The Records of an Extremist Apart from the documents of various Congress Presidents the National Archives of India have in its custody the papers of an extre mist—Bal Gangadhar Tilak He was a famous nationalist leader and was a very erudite scholar He was editor of Maratha and Kesari, Tilak was prosecuted and convicted on a charge of sedition He demanded that India should have an autonomous government absolutely free of the British control In 1916 Tilak started Home Rule League - In

December 1920, he declared the attainment of *Purna Swaraj*, and not mere Dominion status to be the goal of India His two works the *Geeta Rahasya* and the *Aryans* are well known

A good number of letters of Tilak are available in the Kharpade collection Tilak corresponded regularly with Kharpade His letters deal with presentation of India s case for self determination before the peace Conference at Paris In his letter dated July 24 1919 Tilak advocated refusal to give evidence before the Select Committee on the Indian Bill as protest against the Punjab atrocities Some letters of Tilak deal with Lala Lajpat Rai s activities in America and relate to India s claim for self determination In one of his letters dated June 19 1918 Tilak wrote about restrictions imposed by Government on his visit to England Papers on the trial of B G Tilak include the charge sheet issued to him as well as the proceeding of his trial

Documents on the Activities of Gandhiji Activities of Gandhiji are best reflected in N K Bose collection (1930-46) Prof Nirmal Kumar Bose is famous for his writings on Gandhiji He was a close associate of Bapu His collection is composed of books important papers magazines and news paper clippings There are a number of good books in the collection which include corporal punishment in India by Sir Henry Cotton An other book deals with the Montague Chelmsford Reform proposals with a foreward by Annie Besant

However the backbone of this collection are the news paper clippings which cover Gandhiji s views and activities for a period 1930-46 These clippings include Bapu s interpretation of *Purna Swaraj* sentence on Bhagat Singh his ideas on Gandhi-Irwin Agreement and full text of Gandhiji s broadcast to America from Kingley Hall In one of them the actual text of Gandhi-Wavell correspondence has been publi

shed (Papers on Champaran may be viewed as better source for agrarian history of modern India)

The Archives of a Liberal Jurist The private papers of Dr M R Jayakar are extremely important Hony Vice—Chancelor Poona University since April 1948 and elected to the Bombay Legislative Council in 1923 Dr M R Jayakar was leader of Swaraj Party in Bombay He was deputy leader of the Nationalist Party (1927 30) He was delegate to the Indian Round Table Conference in London In 1937 he was appointed Judge of the Federal Court of India In January 1939 he was appointed member of the Privy Council Dr Jayakar was also member of Constituent Assembly of India His valuable collection of personal correspondence was deposited in the National Archives of India in 1964 by the executor of his will Dr D R Gadgil The Jayakar collection comprises of 1099 correspondence files 68 files of miscellaneous papers, 53 diaries, 248 volumes of newspaper clippings and 28 chapters of his autobiography and subsidiary lists and indexes Dr Jayakar exchanged letters with C R Das Lala Lajpat Rai, Dr Annie Besant Pandit Motilal Nehru Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru Gandhiji C F Andrews, B R Ambedkar Mohd Ali Jinnah Mohd Sir Zafrulla Khan Dr Rajendra Prasad Lord Irwin Lord Linlithgow Ramsay Macdonald Lord Samuel Hore and other distinguished contemporaries His papers deal with the Indian freedom struggle and include documents on Civil Disobedience Movement release of Gandhiji the Simon Commission the Round Table Conferences the working of the Indian reforms separation of Burma from India The papers on Indian constitutional reforms are most valuable Two hundred forty eight press clipping volumes of the collection are a mine of information The Jayakar papers[2] are in constant demand by the research scholars

2 Bela Dikshit has published an article 'A Note on Jayakar Papers in *Shodhak* Vol I pt C 1972

Sir Sita Ram was an eminent lawyer, scholar president of the U P Legislative Council He was knighted in 1931 He was appointed India s High Commissioner for Pakistan in 1949 50

Sir Sita Ram s collections comprises 54 files It includes letters of Pt Jawaharlal Nehru Liyaqat Ali Khan Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai Sir Maharaj Singh Dr Kailash Nath Katju Sir Maurice Hallet, Sir Farams Mudie, Sir C Y Chintamani Sir Malcolm Haily Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others His papers throw light on the Boycott Movement treatment of political prisoners in Jails Kakori train decoity case and internment of Mrs Annie Besant Sir Sita Ram s secret correspondence, as India s High Commissioner in Pakistan with important officials of India and Pakistan, covering the period 1949-50, is extremely important in the context of Indo Pakistan relations

Papers of literary genius The National Archives of India has also acquired documents of literary genius In this connection mention may be made of the documents of Pandit Benarsi Das Chaturvedi and Pt Padam Kant Malaviya

Padam Bhusan Benarsi Das Chaturvedi is a distingui shed Hindi Scholar and had been a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi C F Andrews and Ravindra Nath Tagore The important correspondence of his collection is about Pt Jawaharlal Nehru, Munshi Prem Chand Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi Maithili Sharan Gupta Acharya Narendra Deo Dr Sampurnanand Mahatma Gandhi Purushottam Das Tandon and others

His collection is composed of three distinct parts viz (i) the private papers of C F Andrews (ii) Papers relating to the Indians overseas (iii) correspondence of Shri B D Cha turvedi The press clippings maintained by Sri Chaturvedi on miscellaneous topics are from well known periodicals

They are of considerable evidential value The collection includes 164 photographs of Indian revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh Chandra Shekhar Azad and others The cause of revolutionaries has been extremely clear to Chaturvediji An account of this collection will perhaps remain incomplete without mentioning a manuscript written probably by Ram Charan Lal Sharma giving an account of the horrible conditions under which Indian Patriots lived in the Andaman Jails

Equally important is P K Malaviya collection which covers the period of 1907-1967 The collection partly comprises the correspondence of Padam Kant Malaviya and his father Krishna Kant Malaviya with several individuals as Gandhiji C Rajgopalachaari Subhash Chandra Bose P D Tandon, Jawaharlal Nehru Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr Rajendra Prasad A large number of press clippings and extracts from the newspapers from an other significant aspect of the collection Also included in it are several valuable volumes of the *Abhyudaya* which was founded by Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya in 1907

Among the main subjects discussed in the correspondence and the press cuttings mention may be made of the activities of the Forward Bloc Madan Mohan Malaviya centenary Indo Japanese friendship Subhas Bose s death controversy Phulpur by elections of 1964 The volumes of the *Abhyudaya* cover a large period from its inception to 1948 there being gaps for some years Under the Editorship of Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya the periodical published valuable comments on the administration of India under Lord Curzon Apart from the papers of literary persons the National Archives has acquired the documents of the first President of India

Archives of the first President of India : The private papers of the first President of Indian Republic Dr Rajendra

Prasad were acquired from his son B Mrityunjay Prasad in 1972-73 Dr Rajendra Prasad joined Mahatma Gandhi in the Champaran agrarian movement He was President of the Indian National Congress in 1934 1939 and 1947 He was Minister for Food and Agriculture in the Interim Government

Dr Rajendra Prasad collection comprises of 852 files covering the period 1935 61 It includes correspondence of Gandhiji Pt Jawaharlal Nehru Rabindra Nath Tagore, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Subhas Chandra Bose C Rajagopalachari Ajit Prasad Jain Dr B C Roy T T Krishnamachari M C Chagla S K Patil and others

The collection deals with All India Congress Committee It includes letters from the Foreign Political and Economic Departments of A I C C One of the important file deals with the position taken up by the Congress on the question of World War II and correspondence with the Viceroy It includes draft of Dr Rajendra Prasad s reply to Viceroy s letter drafted by Nehru with corrections by Gandhiji and additions by Rajendra Prasad An other file deals with the homage paid to the memory of Guru Rabindra Nath Tagore by the All India Congress Committee Files are also available concerning the partition of India problems confronting the interim Government mourn on Bapu s death and president s correspondence with the Ministers of the Union Government Dr Rajendra Prasad s correspondence with the Governor General of India officers of the Government of India in the foreign countries and his personal friends like Sardar Swaran Singh K M Munshi Dr C P Ramaswami Aiyar Dr K N Katju Morarji Desai Jagjiwan Ram and others forms the backbone of his papers

Some of the speeches delivered by Dr Rajendra Prasad

and his correspondence regarding food policy and other important notes concerning the constituent Assembly of India are available

An account of these papers will perhaps remain incom plete without mentioning Gandhiji s vi it to Champaran and the recording of evidences by Gandhiji and B Rajendra Prasad of the peasants of Bihar who were mercilessly tortu red More over, the manuscripts of India Divided have also been acquired

The newspapers clippings of Dr Rajendra Prasad papers are quite informative and deal with India s demand for self determination and resignation of Subhas Chandra Bose from the congress his letters to the congress leaders, the rift in the congress and Gandhiji s statement on the defeat of Dr Pattabhi and relate to the Cabinet Mission

Such is the story in brief of private papers in the National Archives of India

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Report on the papers Relating to the trials of Indian Revolutionaries (1914-42)

Ram Pande

On 29 11 73 the papers of six important trials of Indian revolutionaries viz Delhi Explosive case, 1914, Case of Crown Vs Manohar lal and Mohd Sultan, 1923 Assembly Bomb ca e 1929 Ca e of Crown Vs Harbandhu Samajdar 1933 and the case of Crown Vs Jagat Singh 1942 were acquired by the National Archives from the Court of District and Sessions Judge Delhi All these cases roused considerable excitement and publicity during the days of their trial With the passage of time the e court papers have passed into the arena of history Now while studying the various aspects of reedom struggle, the scholar can justly look into them with a feelng of interest and detachment and use them as documentary evidence A report on these six cases is submitted as under

(1) **Delhi Explosive Case : (Trial No 8 of 1914) —** In the case Amir Chand and Oudh Bihari accused were charged under sections 4 5 and 6 of the Explos ve Substance Act The documents of this case include among other things

(1) Statements of Amir Chand and Oudh Bihari before the Sessions Judge Delhi

(2) The judgement delivered by the Sessions Judge Delhi

Both Amir Chand and Oudh Bihari were found guilty and sentenced to transportation for 20 years each, under section

(1) the Explosive Substance Act By Mr M H Harrison I.C.S The papers acquired by the National Archives include ten printed copies of the proceedings of Delhi Explosive case

(2) **The Delhi Conspiracy Case (Trial No 6 of 1914)** This case aroused greater public enthusiasm and publicity In the case the accused, eleven in number, stood charged with conspiracy to commit murder under sections 302/120 B on 31 3 1914 of one Ram Padarath The principal accused in the case were, Amir Chand, Basant Kumar Biswas, Dina Nath Sultan Chand, Rash Bihari Bose Har Dayal Arjun Lal Sethi, Hari Ram Sethi and other persons including Hanwant Sahai At the time of the hearing of this case Rash Bihari Bose was an absconder The case involved 203 prosecution witness and 252 bundles of exhibits The documents include statements of approvers, various accused and defence witnesses These are both in original and printed The papers include commitment proceedings in the Court of V Connolly Esqr Magistrate and incoroporate statements of prosecution witness as well as post mortem report of the deceased Ram Padarath male about 45 years old Printed index of exhibits of this case narrate in detail the revolutionary character of the Conspiracy, incorportating evidence for the prosecution

(3) **Crown VS Manohar Lal and Mohd Sultan** In this sensational case two youngmen Manohar Lal and Mohd Sultan aged 19 years and 22 years respectively were involved They were charged under section 117 of the I P C Manohar Lal accused has posted a poster in Haveli Haider Quli, Delhi and admitted before the Court that he did abet the commission of the murder of Government Officers and participated in armed revolution The statement of other accused Mohd Sultan aged 22 years is also available On 23 10 1933 these two young revolutionaries were sentenced to 3 years and 2 years rigorous imprisonment respectively by the Sessions Judge Delhi

(4) **The Assembly Bomb Case** —Trial No 9 of 1929 Crown Versus Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Datta in the Court of Mr L Middleton, I C S is still green in the memory of older generation The most important document in the case is the statement of *Shaheed* Bhagat Singh and B K Dutta who said "we dropped the bombs on the floor of the Assembly Chamber to register our protest on behalf of those who had no other means to give expression to the heart rendering agony Our sole purpose was to make the deaf hear And still we admit we deliberately dropped the bombs into the Assembly Chamber Apart from the statements of the accused revolutionaries the statements of the defence witnesses such as Dr Q A Mansuri Fellow of the Chemical Society London, are on the record The Statement of pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who appeared as a defence witness in the case is also on record The file includes opinions of the assessors as well as the main arguments for the defence Mr Asaf Ali Bar at Law pleaded the case of Bhagat Singh and B K **Dutta** but of no avail The judge Mr L Middlelton found both of them guilty and sentenced them for transportation of life

(5) **Case of Harbandhu Samajdar** —The flame lit by Bhagat Singh did not extinguish with his passing away The flame of revolution once lit continued to burn as is evident from the trial No 1 of 1931 Harbandhu Samajdar Ganpat Lal and Bhagwan Sahai who were charged V/S 120 B and 397 I P C It was a conspiracy by a number of youngmen ranging in the age group of 17 to 23 years, fired with revolutionary ideas whose object was to snatch the revolver carried by a constable In this case Bhola turned an approver The papers of the case include statements of 36 proscution witness statements of Harbandhu Samajdar Ganpat Lal and Bhagwan Sahai The Sessions Judge Delhi found Harbandhu Samajdar guilty and sentenced him to seven years R I It is on record that the party was to obtain *Swaraj* by terrorism

(6) **The Case of Crown VS Jagat Singh, 1942** —In August 1942, Quit India Movement was started in which maximum efforts were made to launch a peaceful agitation against the mighty British empire The non violent attitude of revolutionaries turned violent as it is evident from case No 1 of 1942 In the case Hazara Singh Feroz and Jagat Singh were tried by Mr Nawab Singh I C S Special Judge Delhi for the murder of Pir Mohammad Sharif Sub Inspector of Police Delhi They found guilty of murder and the judge convicted each one of them to death However in his review judgement, dated 3 2 1943 Mr Justice Mohammed Munir set aside the convictions and the sentence and acquitted all the three accused

The papers of this case include statements of the prosecution witnesses charge sheet against the accused persons, defence witnesses as well as judgement delivered by the special judge

Nana Saheb's Letters and Memorials

M L Bhargava

Recent researches into the enormous source-material relating to the 1857 struggle have brought to light a series of letters and memorials written by or on behalf of Nana Saheb the adopted Peshwa These can be classified into four broad categories viz

(i) *Yaddasht* and memorials sent to the Lieutt Governor the Governor-General of India in Council and the Court of Directors of the East India Company

(ii) Nana s letters to the rulers of Indian States persons *of note in England and Russia through Azimullah Khan*

(iii) Nana s *letters to Napoleon Bahadur of France to* Rana Jung Bahadur the Prime Minister of Nepal and an *Ishtiharnamah* to Her Majesty the Queen the Parliament, the Court of Directors and others in 1857 59

(iv) Letter of Nana Saheb of Bithur 1859

First and Second Categories —In the present article the study has been mainly *confined to the letters of the third* category The first two categories and fourth form altogether a separate subject No one is comprised of two *Yaddashts* dated 7th Feb 1851 and 19th July 1851, and three memorials *two of which are addressed to the Governor General of* India—in Council and the third to the Court of the Directors of the East India Company The last one is dated 29th December 1852 These were addressed to the *Company s*

authorities immediately after the death of Baji Rao II on 28th January 1851

In these memorials Nana Saheb has stipulated fulfilment of the terms settled by the East India Company with the Peshwa on 13th June 1817 when he was persuaded to relinquish sovereignty over large area of the country and live in exile at Bithur District Kanpur U P in lieu of the cession of territory yielding a revenue of 34 lakhs the Peshwa was granted a pension of 8 lakhs of rupees per annum for his family as well as the entire retinue of about 5 000 people who also migrated to Bithur along with him In these memorials Nana Saheb has very ably and boldly pleaded his case for the continuance of the pension titles etc Failing to secure reversal of Dalhousie s decision in India he appealed to the Court of Directors in London and sent his *Dewan* Azim ullah Khan abroad on this mission He also started secret negotiations with the rulers of Indian States the French Governor of Chandernagar and some persons in England and Russia These constitute category no second The only available evidence regarding Nana Saheb s correspondence with rulers like Holkar Gulab Singh Scindia and Rajas of Assam Jaipur Jodhpur Jhalawar Rewa Baroda Nagpur, Kolhapur Satara is contained in the statement of Sitaram Bawa tendered before H B Deverous Judicial Commissioner of Mysore on January 18 1858 and the following days regarding Nana Saheb as an organiser of the conspiracy According to Sitaram Bawa Nana Saheb wrote his letters in 1855 at intervals of two or three months each but he got no answer to them After the annexation of Awadh he wrote more letters but now he received some response This document is reported to form part of Kaye s papers now preserved in the *Commonwealth* Relations Office London Until this is obtained and details examined in the light of the published source material nothing

definite can be said about the letters alleged to have been sent by Nana Saheb to other Indian leaders

Sitaram Bawa in his statement also deposed that Nana Saheb wrote to Russia and that he got a reply The account given by W H Russel in his *My Diary in India* of his interesting meeting with the Nana s Agent—Azim ullah Khan—in the trenches before Sebastopol—(Crimea-Russia) pointedly reveals—

(a) *That Nana s agent was in Crimea on his way back* from the prosecution of an unsuccessful claim against the East India Company in London

(b) that Azim ullah Khan who could speak French and English frequently had established contacts with people in England and France before he returned to India

and (c) that on his return to India he accompanied Nana Saheb to Lucknow and visited the Military stations all along the Grand-Trunk Road as far as Ambala (Harvana) and Simla

It may be presumed that the visit of Nana s agent to Russia might have spread rumours that he wrote letters to Russia as well But so far nothing has been found to substantiate the deposition of Sitaram Bawa But Nana Saheb s letters supplied by Archives du Minister des Affairs Estrangeres Paris to the National Archives New Delhi throw a flood light on Nana s early activities

IIIrd Category —The letters are addressed to the French Emperor in the year 1857 The microfilm copy of the French translations of these letters written in Hindustani character by two of his representatives reveal that they were despatched from Chandernagar on two different dates i e 31st March 1858 and 8th April 1858 The first covers 65

pages and the second 10 pages with three enclosures covering 11 4 and 3 pages respectively The first enclosure is a letter addressed directly to His Majesty Napoleon Bahadur dated August-September 1857 The second enclosure is addressed to His Excellency Mr Law Bahadur French Governor in Chandernagar and the third enclosure is also addressed to the Governor but was intended to serve as a covering letter for the two other addresses one to Mr Moras and the other to the King of kings i e the Emperor of France

The above—mentioned letters provide the finest exposition of the socio—economic and political causes of the revolution of 1857 Coming as they do from its chief originator and unquestioned leader they have a tremendous historical value Bahadur Shah II has only reiterated these ideas in his proclamation Nana Saheb accuses the English government of falsehood and deceit in the annexation of the Maratha dominions According to him the Indian rulers have been deprived of their states by strategem and political machinations Thus as many as 200 princes fell victim to violation of treaties and solemn engagements Moreover the English are charged with the guilt of heaping ignominy on the Emperor of Delhi and ruling chiefs of the Deccan dethronment of the successor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the deposition of the Nawab of Awadh Besides these political inequities the East India Company promulgated such Regulations and laws which ruined the propertied men the landed aristocracy One and all sufferred from the heavy expenses of litigation customs duties and taxes on the products of their own fields

The inequities did not end here but they extended to promulgation of laws contrary to the sacred codes and offensive to religious sentiments the dishonouring of women and the destruction of temples and mosques the interference with

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the Hindu customs of adoption and sati the resumption of endowments made for the support of temples and charitable establishments and above all the plan to corrupt the religious rites and customs of the Indians As the result of all these inequities the sepoys of the Bengal Army became disco ntented and decided to fight the English till all their strength was exhausted and so long as a single individual remained alive In cataloguing the inequities Nana Saheb has shown an extraordinary graps over the then political situation and by drawing attention to these he must have won the proud posi tion of an unquestioned leader

By means of letters to the Emperor of France Nana Saheb wanted to seek foreign aid In one of his letters dated August—September 1857 (Enclosure No 1) it is mentioned that

'Before the beginning of the troubles (i e the outbreak of 1857) Nana Saheb sent to Mr Moras (Governor of Chan dernagar) a letter which spoke of his plan to sojourn in Chandernagar This shows his farsightedness because in August-September 1857 he could not reach Chandernagar as then all outlets were closed This was indeed one of the sauses of the 1857 war Whilst the English could continu ously bring fresh reserves by way of sea Nana Saheb could not even get the requisite lead and sulphur for his guns from abroad The only outlet left to Nana Saheb and others was Nepal and all the 55 top leaders with 50 to 60 thousand sepoys their women and children horses and elephants retr eated into the fastenesses of the Nepalese terai

Nana Saheb built high hopes on the French aid as he asserts in his *Ishtiharnamah* to the Queen and others dated 20tn April 1859 that he sent a letter to Chandernager but it did not reach them This has disappointed me or you would have seen what I could do I will however still for

Chandernagar Although Nana s letters did reach Chander nagar, but there was hardly any possibility of the French aid Moreover the striking power of the British navy in 1857-58 was so great that no other European power could dare to challenge the same on the high seas

Receiving no response from the French Emperor or the Governor of Chandernagar Nana Saheb finding all outlets closed on him as well as his followers decided to seek asylum in Nepal This desperate bid resulted in hectic correspondence between Birjis Kudr the boy Nawab of Awadh and Rana Jung Bahadur the Prime Minister of Nepal Nana Saheb also wrote a letter and sent the same through his brother Gangadhur Rao and Bala Saheb Peshwa Bahadur, relating therein all particulars regarding the Peshwa s plight and his desire to seek shelter in Nepal In his second letter dated 2nd February 1859 Nana Saheb praised Rana for his generosity inagreeing to invite Begum Hazrat Mahal along with all the Rajas to Nepal and conveyed to him his own decision to meet him and obtain aid Rana Jung Bahadur under pressure from the British resident in Nepal did not agree to give asylum to Nana Saheb However the Rana agreed to give shelter to the ladies of the Peshwa s family He even went to the length of giving personal protection to the wife of Nana Saheb who resided in a specially built cottage for her in the palace garden of Rana Jung Bahadur in Kathmandu

Having secured protection for the ladies Nana Saheb started correspondence with the British authorities to seek terms of compromise There are two letters in this series dated 20th April 1859 and the other dated 25th April 1859 The first is in the form of an *Ishtiharnamah* addressed to Her Majesty the Queen of England the Parliamnet the Court of Directors the Governor—General Lieutenant—Governor and all officers Civil and Military dated 17th Ramzan 1275

Hijri In this Nana Saheb has cleared his position by gorically denying any hand in the murder of Europea Kanpur He expressed surprise that although the En have forgiven the real murderers they were not prepare allow pardon to him as envisaged in the Queen s procla tion He stated that having joined the revolution ou sheer helplessness he had been fighting against the Queen sarcastically and defiantly says in his *Ishtiharnamah* I strange that you a great and powerful nation have been fig ting with me for two years and have not been able to do ar thing While disowning all guilt Nana Saheb declare that he would fight as long as he lived He held out th threat further in these words, We will meet, and then shall shed your blood and it will flow knee deep I am prepa red to die If I am alone and worthy of being an enemy o so powerful nation as the British it is a great honour to me and every wish of my heart is fulfilled Death will come to me one day What then have I to fear ?

The only response to such a bold letter of Nana Saheb was contained in a communication from Major Richardson alluding therein to the terms of the Queen s proclamation Nana Saheb then addressed a second letter to the English authorities on 25th April 1859 In this he asserted that he was not prepared to surrender unconditionally He wrote if a letter written by Her Majesty the Queen and impressed with her seal and brought by the Commanding Officer of the French (Fransee) or the second in Command reach me I will placing reliance on these officers accept *the terms without* hesitation He was not prepared to put any realiance on British Officers He asserted and querried Why should I join you knowing all the *dagabazi* perpetrated by you in Hindoostan? In the next few lines he recalls his correspon *dence with the Queen through his Eilchee (messenger)* Diwan Azim Ullah who brought a letter from Her Majesty written

with her own hand, and impressed with her own seal Nana Saheb had this letter in his possession at the time of writing this letter If this could be repeated then he could come to terms otherwise 'There will be war between me and you as long as I have life whether I be killed or imprisoned or hanged, and whatever I do will be done with the sword only Nana Saheb wrote this in utter definance and desperation He was heedless of the consequences As life was to end some day he did not like to die in dishonour

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Translation of the first enclosure to the letter dated 28th April 1858 from the Admiralty (of Chandernagar India) to the French Emperor

To

His Majesty
Napoleon Bahadur
King of Kings and Lord of Lords

Foreign affairs
R F
archieves

Sir

May Providence prolong your life

It is customary for an Emperor to watch over the political conduct of the Kings and of the Princes of other countries

Attaches in the service of the great Nanaraw (sic) Saheb Bahadur, we have been sent by him to Chandernager a French possession, we have not been able to find there Mr Moras

Before the beginning of the troubles, Nana-Saheb sent to Mr Moras a letter which spoke of his plan to sojourn in Chandernagar

Today, all the outlets are closed

One cannot state precisely the numerous unjust and arbitrary acts of the English Government in Hindustan it has exterminated the princes of these countries by using violence on them It has even broken its oath it has also taken such measures that a King who formerly possessed a force of 2 500 000 to 3 000,000 men has nothing today Every day one sees the introduction of new rules establishing dispositions which are favourable to it and harmful to the Rajas Princes and inhabitants of these countries These institutions have served to bring misery and poverty everywhere

It does not stop there it has interferred with our religion our customs and our rites These acts have led most of the inhabitants to emigrate

Since God *showers* his favours on your Majesty may your Majesty therefore condescend to give your protection to the inhabitants of Hindustan ? May your Majesty see how *the treaties and the conventions have been violated ! That is* the purpose of the present petition

In its extreme tribulation the population of these countries has no other recourse than to address Heaven and exclaim May God Bring about the annihilation and extermination of these Englishmen or make us perish all ! For we have lost our respect and honour and Dhely (sic) (Delhi) also has been snatched away from us

With so many losses suffered by us what remains for us there to desire ! Your Majesty knows that the Princes are established in this world only to make their subjects happy

For a country producing ten lacs of rupees the assessment has been carried to thirty lacs It is only on this figure that the collection of taxes is carried out and when an inhabitant is not in a condition to pay the land he exploits is attached and is put on sale Sometimes even one becomes the purchasing party Thus a Zamindar who formerly had in his possession a considerable area of land elephants camels and horses is reduced to have nothing any more not even the where withal for living

In Hindustan never at any time did the Rajas and the Princes impose duties on the manufacture of salt and on water which was used for irrigation Today the English exact payment for everything

The trade which procured the means of existenc and resources for the inhabitants of the country is undertaken and monopolised by the English a system which is harmful to the population

On the other hand, the trading in horses was solely reserved for the inhabitants Now the English have made themselves its proprietors Formerly the weavers lived by manufacturing their textiles Today the cloth imported from Europe deprives them of this advantage Thus the industry which was carried on by each in this country is paralysed and lost The English have rendered themselves its masters

The Raja who formery enjoyed the proprietorship of 200 villages is ruined as a result of the circumstances explained above

Law Courts have been established to administer an apparent justice - One cannot enumerate the numerous arbitrary acts which these Law Courts have committed and are committing in the dispensation of justice Thus an individual

seeking justice is ruined as much by the various frustrating expenses as by the acts of extortion to which he is oblige to agreed as by the various ways established for lodging appeal against a judgement It even happens often that the plaintiff and the defendant lose their fortune Only the Treasury profits by bringing about attachment and expropriation The various acts mentioned above are the cause of the exaspera tion of the inhabitants of these countries

We have just been informed that the men holding power dependent on the authority of your majesty want to cede Chandernagar to the English The inhabitants of Hindustan are in general distressed at this measure because they [illegible] that the population of this establishment which upto now was blest with living under a paternal Government it going to be subjected to the rule of the arbitrary

All the inhabitants of Hindustan are attached to the French nation because they remember and will remember for ever the advantages [illegible] received from the French when they were in the service of tho Rajas before the Eng lish had stability it their Government If upto the present they have not given to the French nation the proof of their devotion they were forced to act in that way because the English took from them undertaking not to admit to their service any engagement (sic)

Sir, we entreat you to give your protection to the inhabitants of Hindustan and especially to Nana Saheb like that which you have given to these of Iran For the ances tors Nana Saheb had intimate connection with France Even admitting that this connection could not continue do not reason and equity demand that one should come to the assis tance of a Prince buffetted by misfortune and fallen into distress,

All the Princes of Hindustan are thoroughly convinced that Your Majesty will turn away from the danger which threatens them and whose victims they may become

In order to be convinced of the truth of the facts cited above your Majesty may pleased to send a French deputy so that he can verify them Your Majesty will then see in what position the great Nana Saheb finds himself

May the sun of the Government of your Majesty shine always for the happiness of all those who need its beneficent rays

Signed Durgaprasad
and
Bhagavan Prasad
Attaches in the service of the great Nana Saheb

The day of the waxing moon of the month Bagapada (August and September)